THE

INTERCOURSES

OF

DIVINE LOVE

BETWIXT

Christ and his Church,

OR

The Particular Believing Soul.

Metaphorically expressed by *Solomon* in the *first Chapter* of the *Canticles*, or *Song* of *Songs*.

Opened and Applied in several Sermons, upon that whole Chapter.

In which the *Excellencies of Christ*, the *yernings of his Bowels* towards *Believers*, under various circumstances, the *workings of their hearts* towards, and in, *communion with him*, with many other *Gospel Propositions* of great import to Souls, are handled.

By *John Collinges*, D. D.

Solomon divinitus inspiratus, Christi, & Ecclesiæ laudes & æterni Connubii cecinit Sacramenta, simulq; expressit sanctæ desiderium animæ, & Epithalamii carmen exultans in spiritu jucundo composuit Elegio, figurato tamen. Nimirum velabat & ipse instar Moysis faciem suam, non minus forsitan in hâc parte fulgentem, eo quod illo adhuc in tempore, nemo aut rarus erat, qui revelatâ facie, gloriam illam speculari sufficeret. Bernardus 1 Serm. in Cantica.

London, Printed by *T. Snowden*, for *Edward Giles* Bookseller in *Norwich*, near the Market-place. 1683.

INTERCOURSES

DIVINE LOVE

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To the Lady

Ann Knightley.

Madam,

AMongst the many *Spiritual mercies* by which within these fifty years last past, *England* hath been *exalted to heaven* (as our Saviour said of *Capernaum*) the plenty of *good Books* hath not been the least, so as there is hardly any point in *Divinity*, which hath not been *judiciously* handled, both *dogmatically*, *polemically*, and *practically*, and discourses upon it published in our own Tongue. The things hid in times of *Popery*, yea and for many years in the beginning of *our Reformation*, have been made known, the things *covered* have been *revealed*; what was at first spoken in *darkness*, hath been told *in the light*, *preached upon the house tops* and so published, that all those who would might *read*, and *understand*. Certainly no Nation under Heaven (of which we have any record) was ever blessed with the Means of Grace to that degree; none ever had more *judicious Interpretations of the Word of God*, nor more *serious* and *faithful Applications* of it to the *Consciences* of men and women; so as if either the *Doctrine* or *Duty* of the *Gospel* be yet hid to any, it is much to be feared that it is to such only who shall perish. But of all good Books we have been *exalted* in none more than those which have bin wrote on practical Subjects, Books of all others to be most highly valued, as more immediately serving the great end of man, in shewing him the way of Salvation, directing his coming to Christ, and walking with him, of which we have had such plenty, as indeed there would be no more need of writing on such Subjects, if the *Vanity* of our Natures did not more incline us to a *discourse* upon the same *Arguments* newly wrote, than to what hath been written as well some years since, by which means, the *multiplying* of good Books doth not a little contribute to the *much reading* of good Books, and that I am sure contributes much both to *knowledge* and *practice* (the two great ends that every *Preacher* ought to aim at;) so as I cannot be of their mind who would have no more written of this nature, because so much hath been already wrote, any more than I can be of theirs, who think there is now no such need of *Preaching*, because formerly there hath been so much. So long as there are any Souls in the World, who *know*

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not Christ, and live not up to the *Rules of his Gospel*, there will be need both of the one and of the other; nay, were there none such, there would be need of it, to keep up the *Grace of God* bestowed upon men in its *warm exercise*. Nor methinks should there be one *Preacher of the Gospel* who should not publish the glad tidings of it, and leave some *Record* to the Ages to come, of his faithfulness in that work. The *Riches of Divine Grace* can never be too much published, we can never enough declare his love, who *for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*. Such like thoughts as these, *Madam*, have brought these Discourses into a more publick light: They were composed many years since, soon after my entrance into the publick Ministry. I am willing they should be a *Testimony* to the world, what Doctrine I then Preached, and see no cause yet to be ashamed of, and what scope or design I have always proponoded to my self: The *Gospel* of *the Kingdom*; *Christ*; *The faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. The Apostle *Doctrine*, Acts, 4. 12. *That there is no Salvation in any other* then in Christ, *for there is no other name under Heaven given among st men whereby we must be saved*, were the great things, I took my self concerned as a Preacher to publish to the world: Together with what our Saviour hath taught us, *That he who believeth him i not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned already ... shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, *Joh.* 3. 18. 36. and that *Faith without works is dead*. These were the great things I had in my eye, to open, explain, and apply to people. My apprehension that I saw much of these things revealed in the *Song of Solomon* (though clouded under *Metaphorical expressions*) was that which led me to the study of that difficult portion of holy Writ; than which undoubtedly there is no portion of the Old Testament more *Evangelical*, according to the common *Hypothesis* agreed by the most valuable Divines in all Ages, *viz.* *That it contains a Dialogue between Christ and his Church, or particular believing Souls in it*. If any think I might have chosen plainer Texts from which to discourse these things, I freely yield it as to many of them. But shall this excellent Book, always acknowledged a sacred portion of holy Writ, by the wisest man upon earth stiled the *Song of Songs* (that is, the most excellent Song) lie by us as the *Vision of a Book that is sealed*, or be bound up in our Bibles for nothing? Or can there be any work more worthy of a *Divine*, than to attempt

tempt the clearing of so incomparable a piece of *Divine Revelation* from that *darkness* which it pleased God to cloath it with in a time, when the most which he spake concerning Christ, was in *Types & Prophecies*, or *Metaphors*. *Time*, together with the *Sermons* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, have expounded the *Types* and *Prophecies* of Christ. Is it not a work worthy of us to explain the *Metaphors*, that we might have a Christ wholly unveiled? There's no great fear of any dangerous erring in the case, if he that explaineth taketh care, that his *Explication* agreeth with plainer Revelations. *Madam*, I think I may further say, that there is no portion of holy Writ so copiously as this, expressing the infinite love, and transcendent excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. None that more copiously instructs us, what he will be to us, or what we should be toward him, and consequently none more worthy of the pains of any who desires to *know Christ*. My Meditations upon the second Chapter composed in my maturer years, were published some years since: Those upon this Chapter have (being done in my younger time) staid, till I could get some leisure to peruse them my self, and correct some things in the stile, especially (our juvenile fancies, seldom pleasing us in our maturer years.) You will, I hope, *Madam*, pardon my *Dedication* of them to your *Ladyship*: Your self knows how great *Obligations* you have laid upon me: I cannot answer them: These are all the Requitals we can make our Friends for their kindnesses. *Silver and gold I have none*, but what I have I humbly present your *Ladyship* with; nor shall I have been wholly unserviceable to your *Ladyship* in your highest concerns, if any thing in these Discourses shall help further to inflame your Soul with love to him who is *the chiefest of ten thousand*, and contribute to the sending of your Soul to Heaven in the *admiration* of *your Beloved*, where you shall *see him as he is*, whom these Discourses will but shew you as *in a glass darkly*. *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

April 3. 1683.

Your Ladyships most humble Servant,
JOHN COLLINGES.

To

TO THE
READER

Some few years since, I was prevailed with to publish some d
upon the Second Chapter *of this excellent Song. I had*
me these upon the first Chapter, but they being composed in my
er years, I was desirous first to peruse them, before I suffered
come forth into the World, since which time I have had so little
the perusal of them hath taken up much longer time than I then
upon. The publishing of my discourses upon the Second Chapter
liged me to take something out of those discourses, wherein those
legible as I could, concerning the Contents of the Book, and the
form, *and title of it, which I have restored to their due pla*
some advantage (all those things falling in to the handling of t
verse) I am not, upon the perusal of notes composed so many yea
my self much pleased with the largeness of my discourses upon the
six first verses, occasioned from the variety of Propositions
from them, but there are couched in those verses so many very great
and my consulting so many expositors as I did, together with my
ness to suspect my own judgment rather than those whom I had re
prefer before my self, was the cause of that. Nor did I think it
material, if I saw a Proposition *offered me by any valuable inte*
as founded on one of those verses, which I saw was a Propositi
truth, and justifiable from other Scripture, *whether it were co*
there founded or no, for he pretends to too much skill, that will be
strive in giving the sense of a metaphor *in this or that Text. It is*
for a modest Interpreter *to give a probable sense of such expressions*
to prove it from a plainer Revelation. *I hope thou wilt be so char*
to me, as to think that I troubled not a Popular auditory, with a
thou wilt find here in the opening of the several verses. I bless God
never so idle as to make up discourses to people of what I knew th
not understand. What I found in my notes put in for my own Satis
on I have let go, not knowing but my book might fall into the
some Scholar, who might be able to judge from what Satisfa
what grounds I formed such Propositions of truth *as I di*
several verses so preparing the matter of more Popular, and practic
course. I bless God I always looked upon the work of the ministry,

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…grievously will serious employment under Heaven, whether the Minis…
…studies with reference to explication or application. In the first he…
…is as Interpreter, unfolding the words of the eternal God, from phrases…
…unintelligible to the infirm capacityes of his people. How great a duty…
…it to be the Lords Interpreter? In the latter he acts as an Ambassa…
…, perswading, and offering termes of peace between God and men…
…seeme discovering all his art in endeavouring meanes to be reconciled to God. Who is…
…I had, the sufficient for these things? As to the former we have no more accommo…
…d in my yeares owne, then searching the Originall texts, comparing the usage of…
…offered the words in one Text with the usage of them in others, consulting In…
…fallible interpreters who have gone before us, then using our owne judgments, as…
…I then shall what they have said, or our own thoughts shall further suggest to…
…happier first: then will discern that this is the method I have used, and if any…
…those as long I have been misaken, I have erred neither wilfully nor singly.
…and the Diuine I had examined the several verses, my work was to raise Propoſi…
…tions place, from them so interpreted, to open them, to justify them to be divine…
…ing of the truths from other places of plainer Revelation. For my method, and…
…any yeares sure, it is what I judged most accommodate to the end of my work. No…
…on the subject discourseth to any length upon a subject without a method, some…
…positions use a Cryptick method, which onely for their own conduct, others a…
…a greater publique method for the advantage of others, the former may do well…
…without any paines in the Schools, where the end is only to raise some subtile ouert affe…
…I had reasons; I never thought it proper for the Pulpit, where the Preachers end…
…think it not should be, to inform the People in the great things of God, and to…
…dle intellect their hearts, and in order as it is to be bound to speak with the best…
…position vantage both for their memories and understandings, then will find…
…yeeld certainly keep to the ordinary plain method of explication, confirmation,…
…will be found application. No man having drank old wine desireth new, for he…
…. It is enough, the old is better. In the proof of Propositions I have rather studi…
…pressions, I the evidence of holy writ, and Scripturall reason, then other more in…
…so uncertain Topicks, knowing it the duty of Ministers to take care, that…
…with all the faith of their people may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the…
…of God I power of God. One plain Text of holy Writ more confirms a Proposition…
…than they Divine truth to an understanding Christian, then an hundred rational…
…Satisfying arguments. For my stile it was the least of my study, my Opinion always…
…that what Augustine calls diligens negligentia, was the best dis…
…to that; while I was yet a very young man I had learn'd out of…
…Hierom, that it was no Solecism in a Preacher to use* ossum *for* os, *for*
practical (saith he) an Iron key *is* better then one made of gold, if it will better
…nistry, open the door, *for that is all the use of the key. I had learn'd out of*
Hierom,

Hierom, *that a gaudry of phrases, and words in a Pulpit is but* Signum insipientiæ. *The words of a Preacher, saith he, ought* pungere, non palpare, *to prick the heart, not to smooth and coax. The work of an Orator is too precarious for a Minister of the Gospel.* Gregory *observed that our Saviour hath not stiled us* the sugar *but* the salt of the Earth, *and* Augustine *observeth, that though* Cyprian *in one Epistle shewed much of a florid Orator, to shew he could do it, yet he never would do so any more, to shew he would not. The stile of words, the right placing of them for their better chiming, &c. I always thought a* puerile, *and* pedantick thing, *fitter for a School boy, then a minister of the Gospel. Honest Souls when they come to hear the word do not come to see* Reeds shaken with the wind of *Ostentation and Vain-glory, nor yet to see* men clothed with the soft rayment *of fine expressions and phrases, (which for the most part like such clothes have least efficacy to warm a Soul, or to keep it in any Religious heat) they come to* hear a Prophet, *yea* more then a Prophet, *a man that shall reveal the mind and will of God to them. To me the most tunable tongues in Pulpits, always ring most awke. It is beneath the gravity of a Preacher to tickle a wanton Ear. The end of all words is but to convey to our minds the knowledg of things, and those are the best words that do that best,* grandia granditer dicenda. *I never thought my self further concern'd as to words, then to speak intelligibly, and so as through no rudeness or indecency of phrase to make Persons nauseate my discourse who had a just Reverence for divine things. Words will always follow matter, but* matter *doth not always attend words. I bless God I early discerned and avoided this trifling, rather desiring to humble that stile which was at my tongues end, than to strain my tongue to a dialect which I either thought my People understood not, or was beneath the greatness of the subject of my discourse. If any think the portion of Scripture undertaken in these discourses not fit for a Preacher, they should do well to consider, whether it be not a portion of holy writ, and such a portion as the eminentest Divines in all ages, and of all persuasions have thought worthy their pains to inquire the sense of. Having thus far Apologized for the following discourses I leave them to thy candor and judgment, begging God's blessing upon them to thy Souls advantage,*

JOHN COLLINGES.

April 3. 1683.

The



The *First Chapter* of the *Song of Solomon* paraphrased, and turned into English *Meeter*, so as it may be Sung in the *Ordinary Tunes*, in which the *English Psalms* are sung.

I.

THE *Kisses* of *thy Mouth* (Dear Lord)
Let my Soul only have,
No Earthly thing I do desire,
No worlds fine things I crave.
Let me thy *Gospel Doctrines* have,
By them O speak to me
So by thy Grace, that I in them
Thy special Love may see.

V. 2.
Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

Of thy mouth.

II.

A *Kiss* Lord! is but a small thing,
But a Love-token 'tis,
The Least of that is Sweet to me,
Lord grant me but a kiss.
One Kiss is sweet, but not enough:
Let me more kisses have;
My wants are more than one, therefore
More Kisses I do crave.

Kisses pl.

III.

Thou hast varieties of Grace
My Soul of wants as much:

For thy loves are better then Wine.

As are my wants, my dearest Lord,
O Let thy Loves be such.
Drunkards are pleas'd with wine, but I
In it no taste can find.
O Let me only know, that thou
To my poor soul art kind.

V. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good Ointments: thy name is as an ointment poured forth.

IV.

The knowledge thou hast given my soul
How much thy Loves are worth,
Above created things is that
Alone which draws it forth
In breathings after Thee. Thy Name
Is Ointment poured out,
Which with its fragrant smell perfumes
The places it about.

Therefore do the Virgins love thee.

V.

Therefore the Virgins do thee love.
The undefiled mind
Can satisfaction no where else,
But in thee only find.
Every such Virgin will thee love
And thee alone desire.
Thy sweetest Ointments fuel are
To feed that sacred fire:

V. 4.

Draw me, we will run after thee.

VI.

Lord I should come to thee: thou art
The term to which I move;
I should (O Lord!) run after thee
In the scent of thy love.
But I can neither run nor come
Unless thou first me draw.
Either my lusts do me seduce,
Or Satan doth me aw.

VII.

Draw me.

O put forth thine Almighty hand,
Let power, and love constrain

My feeble Soul to follow thee,
And with thee to remain.
Lay hand O Lord ! upon my will,
Then I ſhall willing be :
Put ſtrength into my legs and I
Shall then run after thee.

VIII.

Lord move me firſt, then I ſhall move *Run.*
And ſtand no longer ſtill,
Yea I ſhall move with ſtrength to do
What is thy ſacred will :
I ſhall not only move, but run,
Make haſt, and not delay,
To keep thy precepts, if that thou
Wilt help me in my way.

IX.

It ſhall be then my meat and drink
To do what thou requireſt.
Thou Lord ſhall then of me receive
Whatever thou deſireſt.
I ſhall nor faint, nor weary be,
But perſevering run,
Until the race be finiſhed,
Which my ſoul hath begun.

X.

My Lord ! not I alone, but mine
Shall alſo follow thee : *We will run.*
I ſhall make known thy ways to all
That ſhall converſe with me.
Sinners by my example ſhall
Be turned to thy Grace,
When they ſhall hear, how thou to me
Haſt ſhewn thy pleaſant face.

XI.

My Soul melts, I did ſpeak but now
The King hath anſwered. *The King hath brought*
me into his Chambers :

we will be glad, and ejoice in thee. ----

And me into his Chambers brought,
Unto his Royal Bed.
How doth my heart, now leap for joy?
How is my countenance glad?
My ſoul can now deſpond no more,
It can no more be ſad.

XII.

In thee, O Lord! I will be glad,
Thou art my only joy;
Thy Loves I will remember, when
New troubles me annoy.
The ſavour of the worlds ſweet wines
Is a poor tranſient thing.
But I ſhall ne're (I truſt) forget
The Love of Chriſt my King.

---- *We will remember thy loves more then Wine.*

XIII.

In him all things excelling dwell,
They 've choſen him their throne;
TheSaints will him ſincerely love,
And will love him alone;
The more upright the greater love
They to the Lord ſhall bring.
Who loves them with the greateſt love,
And is the Lord, their King.

Upright things, or Uprightneſſes love thee.

XIV.

V. 5.
I am black but comely, O you Daughters of Hieruſalem! *as the Tents of* Kedar; *as the Curtains of* Solomon.

You Daughters of *Hieruſalem*
The City of my God,
You who in the ſame Church with me
Have taken your abode,
Upbraid me not, that I am like
The Coverings upon
Black *Kedars* Tents. I'm alſo like
Curtains of *Solomon*.

XV.

I black am *from my ſelf*, but am
By *Imputation* white.

By

By th' *first birth* I am black and dark,
But, by a *new birth* Light.
I black am in your curious Eye.
And in my own much more;
But *white* in my *Beloveds* sight
Since he hath paid my score.

I am black but comely.

XVI.

Look not *on me* because I'm black:
With a too *curious Eye.*
Nor *with disdain*, nor let my black
Visage you *satisfy*:
Much less dis-colour you. Behold
(Sisters!) and pity me.
My *Blackness* is not my delight.
Ah! 'tis my misery.

V. 6.
Look not upon me because I am black.

XVII.

The Sun hath scorch'd me with its heat.
It is by that I am tann'd.
My Mothers Children also have
Touch'd me with unkind hand. (tend;
Their Vineyard they would have me at-
Mine own I did not keep.
The envious one hath collied me
While I thus lay asleep.

Because the Sun hath looked upon me: my Mothers Children were angry with me. They made me the Keeper of their Vineyards, but my own I have not kept.

XVIII.

What Souls will not Afflictions tann,
If they be sharp and long?
Or who is not discolour'd by
Temptations, if too strong?
Worldly distractions spoil the look
Of a Religious mind,
But ah! through negligence I have
Been to my self unkind.

XIX.

But O thou whom my soul loves best,
Tell me where thou doest use

V. 7.
Tell me O thou whom my soul loveth, where

At

thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at noon.

At noon to feed thy flock. At noon
Do not my Soul refuſe.
When as Afflictions ſcorch me moſt
Be thou at hand to me,
And teach my Soul at ſuch a time
How it may come to thee.

XX.

At noon, [*the time when Shepheards are moſt at leiſure.*]

O thou Shepheard of *Iſrael*,
Let me but know the hour,
When moſt of thee I may enjoy,
Taſt moſt thy Grace and Power.
By th' flocks of thy Companions,
I would not turn aſide.
With thee alone I would converſe;
Be thou (O Lord!) my guide.

For why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy Companions.

V. 8.

XXI.

If thou know not O thou faireſt amongſt Women, go thy way forth by the footſteps of the flock, and feed thy Kids beſides the Shepheards Tents.

Thou faireſt ſhe! doſt thou not know
Where me at noon to ſee?
The footſteps of the flock will teach
Thee the right way to me.
Feed by the Shepheards Tents, for there
I ſhall moſt ſurely abide;
The Shepheards that derive from me
Shall be to thee a guide.

V. 9.

XXII.

I have compared thee O my Love, to a company of Horſes in Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

I have compar'd my love unto
The goodly company
Of Horſes which King *Pharaoh* draw,
Made ſtrong by Unity:
Of Horſes which march on to meet
The armed men, and ne're
Do from the glittering Sword turn head,
But mock at Cowards fear.

XXIII.

V. 10.

Thy Cheeks are comely, with rowes of Jewels,

Thy Cheeks (my Love!) are comely made
With rowes of Jewels given
Thee,

Thee, by my ſelf: Thy lovely neck
Adorn'd with Chains from Heaven.
I will yet give thee further grace
Borders of Gold I'le make,
And ſpots of Silver thou ſhalt have
And for thine own them take.

thy neck with Chains of Gold.

V. 11.

We will make thee borders of Gold with ſtuds of Silver.

XXIV.

O may my deareſt Royal Lord
From's Table never ſtir.
How ſweetly doth my ſpikenard ſmell
While's that he ſitteth there.
Even his own Graces will not ſmell
When he is gone from me;
His Grace in me doth daily need
His Royal company.

V. 12.

While the King ſitteth at his Table: my ſpikenard ſends forth the ſmell thereof.

XXV.

My well-beloved is to me
Myrrh, in a bundle tyed.
More precious, medicinal, and ſweet
Than all the world beſide.
Betwixt my Breaſts he ſhall have place,
There he ſhall alwaies lye;
It is the place for poſies. There
I will this bundle tye.

V. 13.

A bundle of Myrrh is my beloved unto me, he ſhall lye all night betwixt my breaſts.

XXVI.

Engaddi's Vineyards have their plants
Of *Camphire* [*Cypreſs.*] All
Are names too ſhort for me whereby
My *Deareſt Lord* to call.
My ſweet companion! thou art fair,
Thou lookeſt with Doves Eyes,
Eyes which both meek, and harmleſs are,
Not ſparkling Cruelties.

V. 14.

My beloved is unto me as a cluſter of camphire [or Cypreſs] *in the Vineyards of* Engaddi.

V. 15.

Behold thou art fair my Love, behold thou art fair, thou haſt Doves Eyes.

XXVII.

Thou haſt a ſatisfyed Soul,
A rich, contented mind,

A plain and clean, and lowly heart
Which is to others kind,
A tender heart, a mournful Eye,
Exceeding quick. These are
The things which make me say again,
Thou art exceeding fair.

V. 16.

Behold thou art fair my Beloved, yea pleasant—

XXVIII.

Nay (my Beloved!) thou art fair
My beauty is to thee
As nothing, worse than nothing, 'tis
But meer deformity.
Thou fair art, and pleasant too,
Thy conversation's sweet.
Thrice happy souls to walk with thee
Whom thou dost please t' admit.

XXIX.

Our Bed is green.

When thou within my bed dost lodge,
How soon it waxeth green?
When thou art gone, no fruitfulness
In it at all is seen.
Not a good work at such a time,
Can my poor soul produce.
Not an heart chang'd in Churches, when
Thou art not in the Pewes.

V. 17.

The Beams of our house are Cedar, and our rafters are Fir.

XXX.

The Beams and rafters of thy house
Of Cedar are, and Fir.
Sweet, beautiful, and strong they are,
Such as shall never stir.
Thy word, and Ordinances Lord,
Support thy Church for ever.
O let my Sins within thy house
Me sever from it never.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

MY deareſt Lord! I'm like the *Roſe*
Which *Sharons* fields doth grace:
Like th' *Lilly* of the Vallies, which
Doth beautify its place:
A flower, and the nobleſt flower
Which in the Fields doth grow;
My ſtructure, ſmell, and fruitfulneſs,
Thy Workmanſhip all ſhow.

V. 1.
I am the Roſe of Sharon, *the Lilly of the Vallies.*

II.

But Lord! I dwell i'th' common field,
And in the Vallies there.
To winds, and weather I'm expoſed:
I live in daily fear,
Leſt *Sharons* herds would me devour,
Or tread me under-foot:
And leave me nought to ſpeak me thine,
But only a true root.

III.

As Lillies are amongſt the Thorns,
So I my Love do ſee.
The Daughters of the peeviſh world
Are grievous Thorns to thee.
Yet thou art lovely there, and thriveſt,
The ugly Thorns commend
My faireſt Love, and do improve
Her while they do her rend.

V. 2.
As the Lilly among Thorns, ſo is my Love amongſt the Daughters.

V. 3.

As the Apple Tree amongſt the Trees of the Wood: ſo is my beloved among the Sons: I ſat down under his ſhadow, with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſt.

IV.

My deareſt Lord it is enough,
Amongſt Thorns let me be;
If while I ſtand there thou wilt be
A ſhadow unto me.
Amongſt the barren Trees in Woods
Let me converſe, if I
Thee as an Apple Tree may have,
That there I do not die.

V.

Thy ſhade, thy pleaſant fruit ſhall be
To me enough for food:
And for protection too, while I
Traverſe th' untrodden wood.
I like an *Hermite* ſit, and ſing;
Thy Apples to my taſt
Do much excel what other Trees
Afford the world for maſt.

VI.

His fruit, &c.

God manifeſted in the fleſh;
O how exceeding ſweet?
When infinite, and finite did
In one Redeemer meet.
Thy ſuffering being tempted is,
When tempted, my relief.
Satan would rob me of my all,
Thou haſt diſarm'd the Thief.

VII.

His fruit, &c.

Lord thy compleat obedience
Unto thy Fathers will,
Is all relieves me, when I think
How often I do ill,
While I do good. But O thy death!
Who can deſcribe that fruit?
Which all my ſoul neceſſities
Exceeds while it doth ſuit.

VIII.

Thy Reſurrection, thine aſcending
Unto thy Fathers Throne:
Thy ſitting there, at his Right Hand
Thine interceſſion:
How ſweet they are? And then to think
That thou again wilt come
To Judgment, not me to condemn,
But only fetch me home.

IX.

Thy fruit, &c.

Thine Ordinances Lord, in which
Thy loves thou doſt diſplay,
The Hony, and the Hony-Comb,
Are not ſo ſweet as they.
The Spirits ſacred fruit, thoſe ſweet
Influxes of thy Grace,
Are what alone me patient make
Of ſublunary place.

X.

V. 4.
He brought me to the banquetting houſe, and his banner over me was Love.

Theſe things my houſe of mourning turn
Into an houſe of Wine; (drop,
Wine not which from Earths Grapes doth
But from thee, the true Vine.
Thy Love O Lord thy Banner is
O're me, and makes men ſee;
Men who thee hate, I do'nt belong
Unto their company.

XI.

Thy Loves thy Banner, teaching me
Where to reſort, when move;
When I fight for a Victory,
Then I diſplay thy Love:
'Tis that unites me unto thee,
And every one that's thine,
Where e're thoſe colours I but ſee,
I run to them as mine.

His banner, &c.

XII.

Protection I from them expect.
Mine Enemies are afraid,
As soon as they see over me
Thy Banners are displaid.
You Daughters of *Hierusalem*,
My heart is sick for love,
I cannot live without your help,
O to my poor soul move.

V. 5.
Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love.

XIII.

My deareſt Lord hath left with you,
Flaggons, and Apples too.
O reach me something left I dye;
Unto the Scriptures go,
Out of those Fats draw out some Wine,
And quickly bring it me:
Bring me his Apples, why should you
Your Lords Spouse dying see?

XIV.

V. 6.
His left hand is under my head: and his right hand doth imbrace me.

I shall not dye, but live, for he
Hath put under my head
His left hand, or his right hand shall
Imbrace me in my bed:
'Tis he alone my aking head
Can hold, and give relief:
They'r his imbraces only can,
Assuage my poor souls grief.

XV.

How ready is he me to help!
I did but cry, he heard:
His left hand hath secured me,
As to the thing I fear'd:
His right Hand soon shall follow it,
And wholly me releaſe:
His right, and left hand both shall join
My love sick soul to ease.

XVI.

XVI.

O Daughters of *Hieruſalem*,
I charge you by the Roes,
And by the Hinds, the friendly Hinds,
Which ſo much love diſcloſe
One to another; Do'nt provoke
My Love, till he withdraw;
By my example wiſdom learn,
Sin not, but ſtand in awe.

V. 7.

I charge you O you Daughters of Hieruſalem, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that you ſtir not up, nor awake my Love until he pleaſe.*

XVII.

You live amongſt the *Roes and Hinds*,
Learn not their wantonneſs.
You'l want the hand of my dear Lord,
When you are in diſtreſs.
Judgment for Sin will come as faſt,
As if the *Roes* it brought.
Do not ſtir up your Lord at reſt,
By one rebellious thought.

XVIII.

Hark! it is my Beloved's voice:
He comes, he comes to me,
Leaping upon the Mountains, him
Skipping upon th' Hills I ſee.
He's my Beloved, though not here,
I know his pleaſant voice,
And though I ſee him not, his ſound
Makes my heart to rejoice.

V. 8.

The voice of my beloved: Behold he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the Hills.

XIX.

He comes; The Mountain of my Sins
I ſee lies in his way:
He leapeth o're that mountain, and
It cauſeth no delay.
He skippeth o're the little hills
Of Creatures oppoſition:
That he may come to my relief,
In my diſtreſt condition.

XX.

I see him coming; O let me
The glorious sight behold,
With th' Eye of hope behold him, and
With th' Eye of Faith more bold.
He comes like a young *Hart* or *Roe*,
Nimbly, and pleasantly:
Behind the wall he standeth, when
In my distress I cry.

V. 9.
My Beloved is like a young Roe, or a young Hart: Behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the Latteſs.

XXI.

In at the Windows see he looks,
And through the Latteſs sees
Both my behaviour, and withal
My sad Calamities.
The Latteſs (Lord!) doth give to me
But an imperfect sight:
O break it down, appear to me
In a more glorious light.

V. 10.
My beloved said unto me. Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.

XXII.

I hear him say, *Rise up my Love*,
My faireſt one arise,
And come away, for I have now
Put off my dark disguise;
The Winter, and the Rain are gone,
The pleasant Flowers appear
Upon the Earth, the singing Birds
Do greet the springing year.

V. 11.
For loe the Winter is past, the Rain is over and gone,

V. 12.
The Flowers appear on the Earth, the time of the singing of the Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land.

XXIII.

The harmleſs Turtles pleasing voice
Is heard on every Tree.
The Fig-trees puts forth her green figs,
The Vines smell pleasantly.
Arise, my Love! Thou faireſt one
Make haſt, make no delay,
'Tis a fit season of the year:
Arise! and come away.

XXIV.

XXIV.

Black ſtorms of perſecution
Have kept thee much at home:
The ſtorms are over, nothing now
Hinders, but thou mayſt come.
The Goſpel Turtles which lay hid
In Corners, now come forth:
All have a Goſpel liberty
To ſing their Saviours worth.

XXV.

See how the Saints bud out in grace,
How gracious fruits abound
Upon this liberty, for all
To hear the joyful ſound.
Ariſe you who yet ſleep in Sin,
Make haſt to come, and live:
O go not on preſumptuouſly,
My Spirit yet to grieve.

V. 13.
The Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender grapes give a good ſmell. Ariſe my love, my fair one, and come away.

XXVI.

The Summer will not always laſt,
Your day of Grace will end;
Come to me while I call, and am
Ready to be your Friend.
Diſcourag'd Souls ariſe, and thick
To my aſſemblies come;
The weather's good, doors ope you have
No plea to ſtay at home.

XXVII.

My Love! who to the rocks dark cleſts
Of late didſt trembling fly,
And under ſtairs ſecret place,
Choſe for thy Covert lye.
Purſu'd by Vultures, now come forth,
Thy Countenance let me ſee,
For it is comely, and thy Voice
Is pleaſant unto me.

V. 14.
O my Dove that art in the cleſts of the rock, in the ſecret place of the Stairs, let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

V. 15.

Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that ſpoil the Vines, for our Vines have Tender Grapes.

XXVIII.

The Foxes which have ſpoil'd the Vines,
The Vines with tender Grape,
Come forth, and take them now for me;
Let not a young Cubb ſcape.
They ſhall no longer ſpoil my Vines,
Chaſe them into their Den:
I'le be revenged on thy luſts,
And on malitious men.

V. 16.

My Beloved is mine, and I am his, he feedeth among the Lillies.

XXIX.

I know that my Beloved's mine;
I know that I am his:
This is my Triumph, this my Joy,
My chiefeſt happineſs.
Had not he made himſelf firſt mine,
His I had never been:
He firſt remov'd my guilt, and then
Purged my Soul from ſin.

XXX.

'Midſt white, and fruitful Lillies he
Loves to converſe and feed;
O let my Soul a Lilly be,
No more a barren Weed.
Until the glorious morn ſhall break,
And ſhadows flee away,
O let my glorious Lord be mine,
And I ne're from him ſtray.

V. 17.

Until the day break, and the ſhadows flie away, turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.

XXXI.

Turn (my Beloved!) to my Soul,
Be like a pleaſant Roe:
Or like the nimble Harts, which do
On *Bethers* Mountains go.
In my diſtreſſed State O Lord,
Let me not be forgot,
Make haſt, and turn, and let me feel
Thee, while I ſee thee not.

A Pre-

A

Prefatory Diſcourſe

UPON THE

SONG of SOLOMON.

Canticles 1. v. 1. *The Song of Songs which is* Solomons.

HAving undertaken this excellent portion of Holy Writ, for the Subject of theſe *Exerciſes*, it is reaſonable I ſhould (according to the uſual, and commendable order of Interpreters,) diſcourſe a little, concerning the *Divine Authority of it*; concerning the *Subject matter of it*; the *Penman*, the *time*, and *occaſion of the writing of it*, and concerning *the form*, eſpecially conſidering, that as to ſome or all of theſe, there are ſome *difficulties* to be aſſoiled, more than concerning other portions of Scripture, and concerning ſome of them, ſome things more peculiar to this, than any other Book.

The firſt *Verſe* of the *Song* (which I have now read to you) gives me a ſufficient foundation for the moſt of my diſcourſe of this nature, if in any part of it I ſwerve from my Text, I ſhall yet keep to my buſineſs, which is by theſe *previous exerciſes*, to prepare you for

clearer understanding of the *sacred contents* of this *Spiritual Song*.

The Text affords us these three propositions.

1. Prop. *That this Book was* Solomon's.
2. Prop. *That it is a Song.*
3. Prop. *That it is a Song of Songs.*

1. The first will lead us to a discourse of the *Penman*, and that, to a modest *Enquiry* after the *time*, and *occasion* of his writing it, and (that well known) we shall easily determine the *Author*, and both from that advantage, and the auxiliary help of other Arguments conclude concerning its *Divine Authority* against all opposers.

2. The second leads me to the consideration of the *form of the writing*, being *Metrical* and *Dramatical*. What else occurreth concerning that, shall be there added.

3. The third will lead me to the consideration of the *Matter* and *Scope*. I begin with the first of these.

1 Prop. *The Book of* Canticles *was* Solomon's.

This is so plainly asserted in the *Hebrew Text*, (where this is the first verse) that it cannot well be denied, without the denial of the other matter contained in it; the only ground of scruple is because of the particle ל prefixed in the Original, which is oft a note of the *Dative* or *Accusative Case*, as if it were rather dedicated to *Solomon*, then written by him: But to clear this, we need not *Christopolitanus* his fancy, that it is to shew us, that *Solomon* here sang not of himself, but to the true *Solomon Jesus Christ*, nor yet *Delrio's* fancy, that it signifies as much as *secundum*, *The Song of Songs according to* Solomon, as we say that the Gospel according to *Matthew*, which was wrote by *Matthew*: for the instances in the Titles of *Davids Psalms*, are sufficient to evidence the *Grammar* good enough, in making ל a note of the *Genitive* Case sometimes.

Taking that therefore upon the Credit of the *Hebrew Text*. Let us more particularly enquire;

1. *Who this* Solomon *was.*
2. *At what time he wrote this Sacred Book, and what* (probably) gave him *the occasion of it.*

Solomon was *the Son of* David: *the King of* Israel.

Matth. 1. 6. The Son of *David* by *Bathsheba*, the Wife of *Uriah*, born in *Hierusalem*, 2 *Sam.* 5. 14. So named by his Father *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 24. at his Birth, it is said, *The Lord loved him.* Upon which, v. 25. *David* sent by *Nathan*, and called his name *Jedidiah*. i. e. *beloved of God.* (*Abulensis* thinks it was not his proper name, nor was

was he afterward (that we read of) called by it.) *Solomon* signifies *Peaceable*, he was so named before he was born, by *Nathan*, 1 *Chron.* 22. 9. and that with respect to the *peace, and quietness of* Israel *in his days*. God there Covenanted with *David* for him, that he should *be his Son*, and that he *would be a Father to him*, and the Covenant recorded, *Psal.* 89. (made with *David*) had a special relation unto *him*. v. 25. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. He succeeded his Father in the *Kingdom* by his Fathers *appointment*, 1 *Kings* 1. 32. and reigned with such an affluence of Divine Blessings, as none might compare with him. *He loved the Lord*, 1 Kings 3. 3. *and walked in the Statutes of his Father*. God in *Gibeon* appeared to him, saying, *Ask what shall I give thee*, v. 9. *He asks a wise and understanding heart, to judge his people, and to discern good and bad asunder*; which saying, so pleased the Lord, that the Lord not only granted what he asked, v. 10. 11, 12, 13. but also *riches, and honour, so as there was none like unto him all his days*. He builded the *Temple*, and the Lord again graciously appears to him upon his Prayer at the *Dedication* of the *Temple*, 1 Kings, ch. 9. The *Queen of Sheba*, came to admire his wisdom, for *he exceeded all the Kings of the Earth, in Riches, and Honour*, 1 *Kings* 10. 23. Now of this *Solomon* it is said, *That he loved many strange Women, together with the Daughter of* Pharaoh: *Women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites*, &c. and v. 6. *They turned away his heart from God, when he was old*, and v. 5. he went after *Ashtaroth*, and *Milcom*, and built high places, for *Chemosh*, and for *Molech*, v. 7. And here ariseth a Question, to which it is reasonable that I should speake something in this place, because this *Song* is judged to relate much to that action of *Solomons* life.

Qu. *Whether* Solomon *sinned in marrying of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, or whether that first match of his was lawful?*

1. *Theodoret* and *Suidas* conclude that he did sin, and prove it from 1 *Kings* 11. 1. where this Marriage of his, together with his later Marriages with the Daughters of the *Canaanites*, seem to be condemned; besides that the law of God seems to have been against all such Marriages, *Deut.* 7. 3. and *Ezra. ch.* 9. 1. reckons it up as the sin of the people that they had taken to wife the Daughters of the *Egyptians*, &c.

2. *Bellarmine, Cajetan, Soto, Abulensis* and others, think, *That he did not sin in this Marriage*, to prove which, they produce, 1 *Kings* 3. 1. where *Solomons* making affinity with *Pharaoh*, and taking of his

Daughter is mentioned, and afterward v. 3. it is said. *Solomon loved the Lord, & walked in the Statutes of* David *his Father.* Certain it is (allowing no transpositions) after this, God made his *signal appearances* to him in *Gibeon*, and upon the *dedication of the Temple.* Besides, they urge the Friendship between *David*, and the *King of Egypt*, and the probability of *Davids* contracting this Marriage for his Son before his death. They further say, that the Law, *Deut.* 7. 3. did not *simply*, and *universally forbid Marriages*, with the Daughters of *Idolaters.* *Joseph* Married *Potiphar's* Daughter, *Gen.* 41. 45. *Moses* Married *Jethro's* Daughter, *Exo.* 2. 1. *Boaz* Married *Ruth* a *Moabitess. Ruth* 2. and *Sampson* a Daughter of the *Philistines*, and *David*, the King of *Geshuri's* Daughter, 2 *Sam.* 3. 2. And there was a particular law directing the formality of such Marriages, when any were taken captive. *Deut.* 21. 10, 11. Besides there are that observe a wonderful councel of God in it, both to reconcile these two contiguous Nations, in a politick alliance: and also in regard that *Solomon* was to be a Type of Christ, who was to reconcile *Jews*, and *Gentiles* unto God. Others think that the Law, *Deut.* 7. only respected the *Canaanites Daughters*, who by Gods command were to be blotted out, but that is of no value, for *Deut.* 21. 10, 11. they might marry *Captives.* They therefore think that he sinned not in his marriage of her, but 1. In his *multiplying of Wives* expressly contrary to the Law. 2. In his *excessive love to and fondness of her.* 3. In his *following her to Apostacy.*

3. I think *Pineda's* opinion is truest: *That it was not by any law given to the Jews simply forbidden, to marry the Daughter of an Idolater, provided, that she was first proselyted to the Jewish Religion*: which was the term which you know the Sons of *Jacob* put upon *Hamor* in the case of *Dinah*, viz. *That his People should be Circumcised.* Thus some of the *Jewish Rabbies* interpret those precepts, *Deut.* 7. 3. and *Exod.* 23. 3. Thus the precept, *Deut.* 21. 10, 11. is easily reconcilable to that, *Deut.* 7. 3. Hence it is very probably concluded that *Pharaohs Daughter, upon her marriage, subjected herself to the Jewish Religion*, and that of the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 44. 10. favours this opinion. —*Forget also thine own people, and thy Fathers House — so shall the King desire thy beauty.* Hence we conclude, that *Solomons marriage* with *Pharaohs Daughter*, was lawful: and contracted by him in his best state, in the beginning of his Reign: but it afterwards proved inexpedient: we read nothing of *Solomons defection*, nor the ill influence of this match till he was old,

old, 1 *Kings* 11. 1, 4. She, and his other Wives, *turned away his heart* from God, *that it was not perfect, as was the heart of his Father David.* He grosly fell away, so foully, that some question whether he ever had a truth of grace: others think his failure a sufficient foundation for their slippery Doctrine of *Total*, and *final Apostacy*, and conclude him damned; it is something to our purpose to examine that Question also.

Qu. *Whether* Solomons *Apostacy was total, and final?*

The *Arminians* say he fell away *Totally*, but not *finally*.) Some amongst the *Papists*, have suspended their Judgment concerning his final *Apostacy*, witness the *Arch-Bishop of Toledo*, who had Heaven and Hell pictured in his Chappel, and *Solomon* half in the one, half in the other. Of this mind are *Jansenius*, *Barradius*, *Torniellus*, *Pamelius*, *Feuardentius*, *Hostiensis*, &c. and amongst the Ancients, *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*; to whom also amongst the Protestants, *Zanchy*, and *Peter Martyr* seem to incline. Amongst the Ancients, *Augustine*, *Prosper*, *Basil*, and *Theodoret* (to whom *Pineda* reckons *Cyprian* and *Gregory*) are thought to favour the more severe opinion of *Solomons total*, and *final* Apostacy. *Abulensis*, *Tostatus*, *Vega*, *Pererius*, and *Bellarmine*, conclude it. The Ancient Jewish Writers, and (amongst the Ancients of the Christian Church) *Ireneus*, *Gregor. Neocæsar*: *Hilary*, *Hierom*, *Ambrose*, *Cyrill of Hierusalem*, and others: amongst the Papists themselves, *Aquinas*, *Bonaventure*, *Hugo Cardinalis*, *Comestor*, *Paulus Burgensis*, *Dionis. Carthus. Genebrard*, *Damianus*, *Pineda*, *Delrio*, *Serarius*, and *Lorinus*. And with these the generality of Protestants, conclude he was no reprobate, nor did fall away *finally*, nor (say the Protestants) *totally*. *Solomon* saw a great evil under the Sun, *Princes going on foot, while Servants rode on Horseback*. *De-La Champius* observeth a greater Evil than this, in the impudent *Jesuites*, whose consciences will serve them to reprobate *Solomon*, and *Canonize Traytors*, and other open Servants of Lusts; and (as he noteth) what Dr. *Willet* long since observed, is in this instance verified concerning *Bellarmine*, That it is ordinary with him, when he finds his own Doctors divided to take in with the worser part of them.

Remonstr. Antisin. art. 5.

V. Pl. in lib. Pinedæ de rebus sol. l. 8. cap. 1. & seq.

V. De La Champii vindicias solum.

We conclude for *Solomon*, that he was a *true Child of God*, and that although he fell, yet his fall was neither *total*, nor yet *final*, but he was restored by repentance.

And for this assertion, we conceive we have sufficient Evidence *from Scripture*, besides the Authorities of men already cited, declaring their sentiments, from several convictions.

Hiroms.

1. *Hierome*, *Cyrill*, and *Pineda* urge that Text, *Prov.* 24. 30. where they conceive *Solomon* speaking in his own Person, and saying. *I went by the field of the sloathful, and by the Vineyard of the man void of understanding: and lo it was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles had covered the face thereof, and the Stone-wall thereof was broken down*, v. 32. *This I saw, and considered it well, I looked upon it, and received Instruction.* To which *Pineda* joins, *Prov.* 30. 1, 2. which (if with the *Jewish Rabbines*, we could conclude that unknown *Agur* to have been *Solomon*) would give some auxiliary strength to that in the 24th Chap. to advantage which, *Pineda's* observation of the (ancient) *Septuagint*, mixing the 24. and 29. and these words of the 30th Chap. together as if all were spake by the same man, and of himself, may be worthy of consideration.

2. *Bachiarius*, *Serarius*, and *De-La Champius* urge a 2d Argument, from 1 *Kings* 11. 43. and 2 *Chron.* 9. 31. where it is said, that when he died he was *buried with the Kings of Israel*, which they think strengthened by their observation, that the Scripture mentions the the burial of *Ammon*, *Joram*, and *Joash*. (3 Wicked Princes) elsewhere. But we must have better Arguments than this, for we are told, that *Abiam*, 1 Kings 15 8. was *buried in the City of David.* so was *Amaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 8. and *Rehoboam*, 2 *Chron.* 12. 1. when on the other side, *Manasses*, (though reconciled to God before his death,) yet had not the honour of that burial. As the wisdom of divine providence, hath left the surface of the *Earth*, for a common walk, both for the just and unjust: so nothing appears, but that the will of God, hath left the bosom of it in any part thereof, a common bed for them; nor do I find any sufficient evidence of any consecrated burial-places so early in the world, which had there been, and had we found *Solomons* Tomb there, it would have told us no more than the Churches opinion of him, and that usually to Princes, is very charitable, and questionless would have been so to him who was the greatest Prince which the Earth ever saw.

3. But certainly for that argument which *De-La Champius*, and *Pineda*, both bring from the *Covenant*, made with *David* concerning *Solomon*, mentioned 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. 1 *Chron.* 17. 13. and *Psal.* 89. *v.* 20, 21, 22, &c. to the 37th *v.* we may say of it as *David* of the *Sword of Goliah*. *There is none to it:* Let us a little view the Text: In the first you have the words of God spoken to *Nathan*, going to enquire Gods approbation of *Davids* design to build a Temple; the Lord denies *David* liberty, but takes his offer kindly, and bids the Prophet tell *David*; *That*

That when his days should be fulfilled, and he should sleep with his Fathers, God would set up his seed after him, which should proceed out of his bowels, and establish his Kingdom, v. 13. *I will establish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever.* v. 14. *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Child. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of Men, and with the stripes of the Children of Men: But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from* Saul *whom I put away before thee.* In the book of *Chronicles*, 1 *Chron.* 17. you have the same thing repeated, only there. *v.* 14. you have: *I will settle him in my house.* In the 89th *Psal.* you have a larger account of that covenant, so far as concerns *David. v.* 20. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. *v.* 29. ---- *His seed also will I make to endure for ever,* &c. *If his Children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes: Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him. Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto* David.

In this Text you plainly discern a *Covenant* made with *David*, on the behalf of his Seed, and that Seed of his, that should sit upon his Throne (which was *Solomon*) as well as on the behalf of himself. Concerning him God saith: 1. *I will establish the Throne of his Kingdom.* 2. *I will be his Father, and he shall be my Child.* 3. *If he sins, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the Children of men,* Psal. 89. *I will visit his transgression with a rod, and his iniquity with stripes.* 4. *My mercy shall not depart from him as from* Saul. *Psal.* 89. *Nevertheless my loving kindness, will I not utterly take from him. Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.*

1. God covenants that although *Solomon* should sin, yet he would not *take his mercy from him.* The very term of *Mercy* signifies more, than the continuance of the Crown to him; for (as *Tychonius* observes) *David* would have understood little mercy, for his Son to have enjoyed a temporal Kingdom, and lost an eternal inheritance.

2. *The punishment which God threatens to him in case of sinning was but a Rod.* The *Rod* of *Men*: for if we should allow nothing to *Pineda's* Criticisme, upon the term used [*Enosh*] to signify men here, which properly signifies *a weak old man*, who cannot lay on strokes hard, but chastiseth his Child gently, so as the *Rod of Men* here mentioned, should be opposed to the *grounded staff* mentioned *Isaiah* 30. 32. which God makes to rest upon others, yet certainly the

the term of *a Rod*; with the adjunct *of Men* speaks a very gentle chastning, with which *eternal punishment* is no way consistent.

3. Add to this; *That the Holy Ghost*, (the most certain Interpreter of Scripture) 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. Applies the very promise here made to the Children of God, *I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my Sons, and Daughters*: I say who so considereth these things must certainly conclude that Gods obligation by this Covenant extended further, than the continuance of the temporal dominion in his line, which is also advantaged, by the consideration that *Solomon* in his life time was chastened with the *Rods of Men*, 1 *Kings* 11. God stirred up against him *Hadad*: *Rezin* and *Jeroboam*, *He was doubtless chastened of the Lord that he might not be condemned with the world.*

1 Cor 11. 32.

Nor can any reasonably think to avoid the dint of the Argument, drawn from these Texts, by telling us, *That a greater than* Solomon *is understood in them*, even he of whom *Solomon* was but a *Type*.

For although it be true, that divers of the Ancients favoured that notion, (amongst whom was *Augustine*, *Ambrose*, *Tertullian*, and *Theodoret*) and that some passages in the aforementioned Texts seem to be by the Holy Ghost himself applied to Christ, amongst which that eminent part of this Covenant *I will be to him a Father*, &c. besides that others seem applicable to no other, as where he promiseth to *establish his Kingdom for ever*: yet it is as true, that the promise *I will be to him a Father* (as I shewed before) is also by the Holy Ghost applied to believers, 1 *Cor.* 6. 18. and those who understand the *Hebrew Idiome*, know that the term עד־עולם doth often signify less, than Eternity strictly so called, and it is as certain that *Hierome*, and divers others of the Ancients apply these Texts literally to *Solomon*. Possibly they compound the business better, who (considering *Solomon* as a Type of Christ) divide the *Covenant* made with *David*, betwixt *Solomon* and *Christ*, thinking that part concerneth *Solomon*, and part concerneth *Christ*. Sure it is, that *Solomon* built the material Temple not *Christ*, and *Solomon* alone, (not Christ) was in a capacity to *forsake the Commandments of God*; and for the *promissory part*, if we say it concerned *Solomon* in the letter, and Christ in the *Mystery* and *Antitype*: I think we shall not much err: nor will this interpretation at all weaken the strength of our argument.

4. I find a 4th Argument for this eminent Person, brought from 2 *Sam.* 12. 24, 25. compared with *Neh.* 13. 26. and 1 *Kings* 3. 3. from whence *De-La Champius* observeth 3 things. 1. *That*

1. *That it is said God loved him.* 2 Sam. 12. 24. ——*And the Lord loved him.* Neh. 13. 26. *He was beloved of his God.* 2. In token of this love God gave him his name *Jedidiah, i. e.* beloved of God. 3. The Scripture saith, *he loved the Lord.* The consideration of the latter makes the plea vain, of those who (to avoid the dint of this Argument) would interpret Gods love of that general favour which he extends to every Creature, distinguished from that by which he elevates the Creature to a *participation of the Divine Nature*: for that love is not so efficacious, as to produce a reciprocal love in the Creature to God again, we therefore *love him* because *he loved us first*, which being granted, unless we grant God as mutable as man, and deny what he hath said, that *whom he loves, he loves to the End*: We must allow that *Solomon*, notwithstanding his great miscarriages, was yet beloved of God, and died in a state of Grace.

Now to these Arguments, might further be added, as strong presumptions in the case, yielding at least some auxiliary strength. That no Text speaketh so desperately concerning *Solomon*; that the Scripture, 1 *Kings* 11. 4. speaking of his falling, seems to hint it a *sin of infirmity in his old age*, and through the great *temptation of his Wives*: That he did only *tolerate Idolatry*, not make it the *Religion of the Nation*. That he after this (as is at least probably and generally concluded) wrote (in testimony of his repentance) the book of *Ecclesiastes*. That he was the *Sacred Penman of Scripture*. These things may much confirm our charitable opinion in the case, for although it be true, that I know no reason to the contrary, but that God, who made use of the *Son of Perdition*, to preach his everlasting Gospel, might also with consistency enough, to the wisdom of his Providence, make use of a *Child of Perdition*, to write, and ingross what his holy Spirit first dictated; nor (saith *Augustine*) hath God less consulted his own glory in it, for now all the good and glory of the truth revealed in those books will be given to God; Beside, it is said that *Balaams* Song is also recorded in Scripture, and a piece of holy writ: yet considering that no one book of holy writ was wrote by such a withered hand as that of a reprobates; and that the Scripture fixeth no such mark upon this great Person, who was the Author of three Books there, and that one of these Books, at least appears (let *Bellarmine* say what he will) to be wrote after the days of his Vanity, and hath in it evident marks of his nauseating his lusts, and former vanities of pleasure, love, riches, *&c.* Nor have

there been wanting some, who have thought so of the other two Books also, *viz.* the *Proverbs*, and the *Canticles*. And to these if we add that he was an eminent Type of our Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ: I say if we lay all these things together, we shall (I think) neither stand in need of the *Rabbinical* figments, (who tell us formal stories of *Solomons* repentance:) Nor yet of that auxiliary help, (in which *Pineda* much triumpheth) which *Petrus de Castro* affords; from that Sculpture in leaden Plates, (wrote in ancient *Arabick Characters*) and first discovered to *James* the Apostle, afterward, to the aforementioned Bishop of *Granada*, who sought for them and found them (saith *Pineda*) *per altos Granatensis montis cuniculos, & latebras*; in which leaden Plates there should be ingraven in Arabick so much concerning *Solomon*, as in *English* sounds thus. *---And he bewailed his sin with a great lamentation, and it was forgiven him, and he died faithful and in peace.* I say there will be no need of these Apocryphal helps, we *have a more sure word of Prophecy:* and stronger Scripture arguments: engaging us to conclude *Solomon*'s repentance, and *Salvation* against some of the Ancients speaking doubtfully; and the more modern *Papists*, speaking both peremptorily and impudently in the case; and must conclude that *Emanuel Thesaurus* speaks like a profane Poet, when he tells us concerning *Solomon*;

V. Pinedam de rebus Solomonis l. 8. cap. 1.

V. Eman. Thesauri Patriarch.

Primus è Christi Proavis Stygem coluit,
Et Primus intravit.
Indubio Argumento; nam Idola posuit non sustulit,
Et Flenda leguntur non fletus.

V. Mercerí prefat. in Cantica.

Having thus far given you a Character of this great Person, who wrote this sacred Book, and by this digression served my design a little, in shewing you that there is no ground from his miscarriages to conclude against his being the *Penman*, either of this or the other pieces of Sacred Writ, to which the *Hebrew Text* entituleth him, and which the *Ecclesiastical Juries* in all ages, have found his. The next thing we have to enquire, is the *time* and *occasion* of his writing it, concerning which, the Scriptures silence hath given Writers the greater liberty to abound in their several senses; I see no great *prejudice*, either to *Solomon* himself, or to the Divine Authority of this Sacred Book, from the opinion of those, who think that *Solomon* wrote this Song in the beginning of his Reign, when he first Mar-

V. Greg. Magni Prolog. in Cantica.

ried

ried *Pharaohs Daughter* (first proselyted to the Jewish Religion) at which time it is said, 1 *Kings* 3. 3. *Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the Statutes of* David *his Father*, and that his Marriage with *Pharaohs Daughter* gave him the occasion of this Heavenly Meditation (for which the greatest ground they have, is that passage, *ch.* 1. *v.* 9. *I have compared thee to a company of Horses in* Pharaohs *Chariots.*) Nor yet from the opinion of those who think that he wrote it in the close of his life, after his return to fellowship, and communion with God. If therefore any shall contend that he wrote the Book of *Proverbs* first; this Book next, and *Ecclesiastes* last of all, grounding their conjecture upon 1 *Kings* 4. 32. where it is said that he wrote 3000 Proverbs, and his Songs were 1005. Or if others think that he first wrote this Book of *Canticles*, (which being Poetry, they think best suited his younger years) then the Book of *Proverbs*, and last of all that of *Ecclesiastes*, (the matter contained in the Book of *Proverbs*, seeming to be the mature issue of years, and the matter of *Ecclesiastes*, speaking a contempt of worldly *Vanities*, like that which is found with gray hairs, that have learned righteousness) I shall not contend with either. There are some who make an observation upon *Solomon*'s calling himself in *Ecclesiastes*, *King of Hierusalem*; In the Book of Proverbs, *King of Israel*: In this Book only *Solomon*; whence they conclude that he wrote this Book in the first of his years, before he was come to the Kingdom. The Book of *Proverbs* next, before he came to dwell in *Hierusalem*, and that of *Ecclesiastes* last, in his more perfect state, but possibly their conjecture is better, who think that *Solomons* spiritual contemplation of Christ, (with which his heart seemeth in this Book to be ravished) was the cause why (forgetting his Titles of Honour) he calls himself by no other name, than that of *Solomon*, and as through all the Book he speaks to and of Christ under no other notion than that of a *Beloved*, and a friend, so he mentions not himself under any higher notion than *Solomon*, and a *Love*, a *Spouse*, &c. glorying more in being the *Spouse*, and *Friend of Christ*, than a great King in *Hierusalem*. Or finally, if any will assert that he wrote this Book last of all, which seems to be the opinion of *Bernard*, *Delrio*, *Hierome*, *Bachiarius*, *Cyrill*, &c. I am indifferent to close with either party, only abhorring the opinion which was anciently condemned in *Theodorus Mopsuesta*, by the Council of *Constantinople* (saith *Delrio*) and which *Philastrius* mentions amongst the Heresies, whose Author he knew not, *viz.* That it is but a *Love-Song*, made

V. Pinedam in prefat. in Eccles. Et Delrio in prolegom. in Cantica.

V. Bernardi Hom. 1.

Sixtus Senensis *in Bibliothe.* l. 8. hær. 9.

by *Solomon*, having relation to *Pharaohs Daughter*, or the *Shulamite*, to which opinion also *Castalio* and *Grotius* seem to encline, and the *Anabaptists* in *Germany* are charged with it by *Sixtus Senensis*, which opinion indeed, is deservedly rejected, and justly to be abhorred of all sober Christians, and there needs no other witness in the case against it, than the great reverence of this Book which the Church of the Jews had, (to *whom* (saith the Apostle) *were committed the Oracles of God*, and who were sufficiently cautelous what they stamped, with that sacred stamp of Scripture Canon) who did not only constantly own this Book, as much as any other, (making it a Dialogue between God and their Church, or betwixt their Church, and some of their Patriarchs) but also barred any from reading of it, until they arrived at their sacerdotal year; whether for fear of a vain interpretation of it, or in regard of the difficulty they justly conceived, as to the expounding the metaphors (with which as with so many Stars it is adorned) or fathoming the mysteries, which they conceived lay couched in it, I shall not in this place determine. Sure I am, as the Authors of the aforementioned gross and unhandsome conceptions, have nothing to give countenance to their wanton fancies, besides the comparison of the *Love* here mentioned, to a *company of Horses in* Pharaohs *Chariots*, and the mention of the *Shulamite*, *Cant.* 6. 13. with another or two expressions of that Nature, upon which expressions the Vanity of their hearts only hath hindred them from putting a spiritual interpretation: so even some of these expressions, with divers others in this Sacred Song, make their impure conceptions highly improbable; for (if the Dialect of times be not strangely altered) it was certainly a strange commendation, for so learned and wise a man as *Solomon*, to give of a Woman whom he loved, to compare her to a *company of Horses*, her Head to *Mount Carmel*, and her Eyes to *Fish Pools*, her Nose to *a Tower*; her Teeth to *a flock of Sheep*, &c. all which with divers such (seemingly uncouth) expressions we have in this Song.

After all this we shall find it no difficult thing to determine the Divine Authority of this Book: The Apostle saith that *Holy Men wrote the Scriptures as inspired by God*, we have evinced, that the Penman of this Book was an *Holy Man*: both in the former and latter part of his life. That he wrote this Book, is universally agreed, and that he wrote it by a *divine inspiration*, can be as little questioned by him, who understands aright the Jewish reverence of it, and ranking it equally with other Books of the Canon. Besides that the

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Churches constant possession of it, requires some force of argument, before it can be rejected; and this hath not yet appeared.

Several witnesses indeed have come against it, but either they have not been agreed, or they have spake nothing Cogent in the cause.

Whereas some object *the many amatorious expressions throughout the Song:* It signifies little to those who have so far observed the Scriptures, as to take notice, that as the Apostle makes use of the *Ordinance of Marriage*, to represent the *mystical Union* between *Christ* and the *Church*, *Eph.* 5. 32. So Christ is expressly called a *Bridegroom*, his *Church*, and the *believing Soul* in particular, the *Bride*, *Joh* 3. 29. And that his preparing the Soul for, and *uniting the Soul* to himself, is called a *Betrothing*, *Hos.* 2. 14, 15. and the Church is called the *Lambs Wife*, *Rev.* 22. and a *pure Virgin*, 2 *Cor.* 11. Yea so far is this from being an argument against the Divine Authority of this sacred Book, that the uncouthness of the same expressions, is an argument, that it is no meer Woman here intended, for besides that (which *Mercer* noteth out of *Aben-Ezra*) that modesty would not have allowed *Solomon* to have left such expressions (had they been to have been carnally interpreted) upon publick record to posterity. Nor was it lawful to the Jews to make their *Sisters their Spouses*, (yet is it a phrase often used in this Song, *My Sister, my Spouse*) besides what I noted before of the strange comparisons used, if they were carnally to be interpreted. 1.

Whereas it is objected by others *that the name of God is not once mentioned throughout the Book.* They might as well (upon this account) quarrel at the Book of *Ecclesiastes* out of the *Canon*, or if not that, yet the Book of *Esther*, which are both subject to the same charge, if any will tell us, that though the name *Jehovah* be not found in *Ecclesiastes*, yet other names of God are אלהים, *&c.* Besides that neither those names are peculiar to God, nor yet to be found in the Book of *Esther*. We also say (with *Mercer*) That there is hardly a verse in this Song, wherein mention is not made of *God*, and *Christ*, according to that metaphorical way of expression in which it pleased the Holy Ghost to dictate this Sacred Song to *Solomon*: nor was their need of any further mentioning of God, in a discourse composed in this form, than under the notion of a *Beloved*, &c. in which notion he is frequently mentioned. And certainly, had this objection been of any value, the superstitious Reverence which the Jews had of the name *Jehovah*, would have engaged them first to have pickt this quarrel: which yet it did not. But *Bernard* gives another 2.

V. Sexti Senensis l. 8. *Biblioth.* hær. 8. Delrio *in Isag. præf. com. in* Cantica. Bernard.

another reason, (and with him I find *Sixtus Senensis Delrio*, and others agreeing) which I confess pleaseth me, *Amor loquitur qui Dominum nescit*, &c. God is not indeed made known to us in this Song, under the names of אל שדי אלהים ארני יהוה צבאות, all which speak, Power, Lordship, Soveraignty, Sufficiency, &c. It is love here speaks: *Quando vult timeri dominum; quando vult honorari patrem, quando amari sponsum se nominat Dominus. Solomons* design in this Book, is to set out God in Christ, reconciled to his Church, and to the souls of his People, imbracing them in the arms of loving kindness. Those other names of God, *Jehovah*, *Elohim*, &c. spake the power, and greatness of God, which well suited the first dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, which was more hard, and rigorous, than the latter dispensation of it. So that the not naming of God under those fore-mentioned notions through out this book, only speaks it a more evangelical portion of Scripture, than some other Books of Holy Writ are. *Solomons* design in this Book was to set out God in Christ reconciled to the Soul, imbracing it in the sweetest arms of loving kindness, and tender mercies: The wisdom of the Holy Ghost therefore directeth *Solomon* to speak in a *dialect*, proper to the matter he writeth; nor is there any thing more usual in Scripture, than for Gods people (going to him for mercies) to give him names expressive of that sufficiency which is in him, and of that suitableness in him, to the necessitous state of his people, and readiness to help him. *David* praying for Divine Protection, calleth God his *Rock*, his *Shield*, his *Buckler*, his *strong Tower*: and Christ hath taught Gods Children to say unto him *Our Father*!

Gregor mag. in Prol. in Cantica.

Deus se se nunc pastorem, nunc fratrem & amicum, nunc sponsum, de industriâ nominat, non absque mysterio, &c. Sixtus Senensis. *l.* 8. Delrio *in Isag. præf. com. in* Cantica

Nor thirdly, Is their quarrel against this Sacred Book considerable, who have this to object against it, *That no place of it is quoted in the New Testament*, for besides that by the same allegation, they may blot out the Book of *Judges*, *Ruth*, 2 *Sam.* 2 *Chron. Ecclesiastes*, and divers of the *small Prophets*, out of the *Canon of Scripture*, I say besides this, there are some phrases in the New Testament, which (in the Judgment of *Beza* and others,) seem to be borrowed out of this Sacred Song, such as those, *Joh.* 6. 44 *No man cometh to the Son but he whom the Father draweth*, compared with *Can.* 1. 4. Saint *Paul* tells his *Corinthians*, that his desire was to present them to Christ *as a Chast Virgin*, which corresponds with *Chap.* 5. *v.* 2. of this Song, where Christ calls his Spouse *Undefiled*.

From what hath been said appeareth, that although the Penman

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of this Book was *Solomon*, yet a greater than *Solomon* was the Author of it, *Solomon* (an holy Man) spake in it, as he was inspired by God. I proceed to the 2d Proposition.

2 Prop. *That this Book is a Song.*

This argues it a piece of *Hebrew Poetry*: wrote (originally) in *Meetre*, upon which account it differs from most of the other Books of Holy Writ. But more particularly I shall open this in 4 or 5 particulars: 1. It is I say a *Song*, one of those which the Apostle, *Eph.* 5. calls *Spiritual Songs*, it may be too hard a task for me to determine, why it pleased the Holy Penman of this Scripture to write it in this, rather than in any other form, I shall by and by shew you that it was a *Song of Love*, and (possibly) the holy Penmans design being to discourse the Souls Communion with Christ (here) under that *Metaphor* might be one cause, (Marriage-Songs being very ancient) 2. To this I shall only add the observation, which some have made of that singular vertue, which the composing and singing of Songs, hath had *to excite* and *inflame the affections*. I remember our *Divine Poet* tells us, *That he was most with God; while he was exercised in his Divine Poetry*, Besides, the suitableness that a Song hath unto the natures of others, the same Author observes, 1.

-----That a verse may hit him who a Sermon flies,
And turn delight into a Sacrifice.

Whether *Solomons* consideration of these, or any of these things, might rather incline him to write in this, than in any other form, I shall not undertake to determine.

Secondly, It is a *Song of Love*. I noted to you before, the ancient custom of singing Songs at Marriages, in praises of the parties so joined together. These Songs were called ὑμεναίους & γαμήλια. The Argument of them usually, was the (supposed) mutual desires of the *Bridegroom*, and *Bride*; and they were also filled with the respective praises of each of them; with the praises of their Garments, Beds, &c. *Solomon* guided by the holy Spirit of God (who often resembled the Spiritual and *mystical Union* between the *Church* and the *believing Soul*, and *Christ* so, of a *Marriage*) maketh choice of this kind of *Song*, in this Book; of this Nature is the 45th *Psal.* and that *Song*, *Isaiah* 51, 2, 3. (though the Argument of that differs.) 2.

Thirdly, *It is a Spiritual Song*. The *Loves* which are here sang, are no *Carnal Loves*, but *Spiritual*, it is not as some profanely fancy, a discourse of Love betwixt *Solomon* and *Pharaohs Daughter*: or *Solomon* and the *Shulamite*, I have heretofore shewed you the vanity 3.

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of that conceit, it is *Sponsa mystica*, a mystical Spouse that is here represented to us under that notion; I have said enough before to prove this.

4. Fourthly, It is *Dramatical*, or διαλογικὸν a Song of parts composed after the form of a *Dialogue*, which was very usual in their Songs of Love; Here are in this Song 3 sorts of Persons, which have their parts. 1. *One who is represented under the Notion of a Beloved.* 2. Another who is represented under the *notion* of a *Spouse*, a *Love*, a *Sister*, &c. 3. The third sort are the *friends of the Bride-chamber*, ordinarily in this Song represented under the notion of the *Daughters of Hierusalem*: who they are represented under these disguises is matter of our further enquiry.

1. Abating those (whose profane fancy we have already rejected) who think that *Solomon is the beloved here mentioned* (making the whole book but a wanton Love-Song) I think the generality of Interpreters are reasonably well agreed, that God himself, or more particularly the Lord Jesus Christ (the 2d Person in the Trinity considered as mediator,) is he who is in this *Song* set out to us under this notion of the Beloved.

2. It is almost as universally agreed, that, *The Church of God in the general, and the particular Servants of God, Members of that Church, are those here represented to us, under the notion of the Spouse*, but whether it were the *Church of the Jews*, considered distinctly, from the *Gospel Church*, or the *Church of the Gentiles*, distinct from the *Jewish Church*, or the *Church*, and *People of God* in all ages, concerning this there are several opinions, according to the particular fancies, and affections of Interpreters, or according to their different *notions*, and *apprehensions*, concerning the matter of this book, which some will have to be *historical*, and make it little more than a Narrative of what God had done for the *Church of the Jews*, of which mind is the *Calder Paraphrast*, and the most of the *Jewish Doctors*. Others will have it *prophetical*, amongst whom are *Luther*, *Alsted*, *Brightman*, *Aquinas*, and Mr. *Cotton*, &c. Others again *Doctrinal*, instructing us in that near Communion, and Fellowship betwixt Jesus Christ and his Church, and every particular believing Soul, and setting out that nearness of *relation*, and *affection*, which is betwixt them, together with their mutual apprehensions each of other; yet it cannot be denied, but there are some particular passages in it, *prophetical*, and more specially relating to the Church long after *Solomons* time.

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By the friends of the *Bride-chamber* called, the *Watchmen*, the *Daughters of Hierusalem*, *&c.* in this Song, are undoubtedly to be understood, the *Ministers of the Church* in respective ages, with the *chorus fidelium*, the whole company of Believers, *&c.*

The last thing which is observable, as to the form of this Song is the *figurative dialect in which it is written*; Besides the continued *Allegory* of two lovers, running quite through the Song, the Spiritual mysteries of it are expressed with a greater variety of Metaphors, than are found together in any other part of holy writ; which make it more difficult to be understood, and which possibly might be one reason why the reading of it was restrained in the Jewish Church. This made that devout man long since cry out; *Hic panis cœlestis, quis vero frangit? non equidem mihi istud temere arrogandum, sic expectetis a me, ut non expectetis, nam & ego unus sum de expectantibus.* Here is heavenly bread! but who can break it? I cannot rashly arrogate such a faculty to my self expect it from me, as not expecting, for I my self am expecting the revelation of it. And thus much shall serve for the second thing. The third follows. 5. Bernard. *in hom.* 1. *in* Cantica.

3. Prop. *It is the Song of Songs* ---שיר השירים.

The *Song of Songs*, (as some think) because it consists of several Songs relating to one and the same Subject, compacted togegether in one, and the same book. 1.

Or (as others) because it is *the most excellent Song*; The Hebrews have several ways, by which they express the superlative degree, one is by *apposition of Substantives*, (as here, the *Song* of *Songs*.) putting the latter *Substantive* in the *Genitive Case Plural*. So that by the *Song of Songs* is meant *the most excellent Song*, now this is so called. (1) Either relating to the other Songs which *Solomon* made, for 1 *Kings* 4. 32. he made a Thousand and five; of all his Songs this was the most excellent: Or else (2.) relating to the other Spiritual Songs in *Scripture*, you read of the *Song of Moses*; of the Song of *Miriam*, and *Deborah*, of the Songs of *David*, *&c.* but no Song like this: This is the *Song of Songs*; of all the other Songs *Solomon* made in Holy Writ, this is the most excellent, not *in respect of the Antiquity of it* (as some have fancied) for doubtless the Song of *Moses*, *Aaron*, and *Miriam*, was far more ancient; nor yet because of the *noble Author of it*, who was the wisest man upon the Earth. But in respect of the *Spiritual matter of it*. Look (saith *Bernard*) upon all the other Authors of Songs in Scripture, and their respective Songs. ——— *Sane omnes (ni fallar) cecinisse reperies pro precepto* 2. *V. Mercer. ad loc.* 1. 2.

suo, vel suorum commodo. ——— hic verò divinitus inspiratus Christi, & Ecclesiæ laudes, & sacri amoris gratiam, & æterni connubii cecinit Sacramenta. Other composers of Songs you will find sang them upon receit of some outward mercy conferred upon them, and theirs: But *Solomon* (here) inspired by God, sings the praises of the *Church, and Christ*, he sings concerning the Seals of sacred love, and the Eternal Marriage. Those are the excellent Songs, which set out the Excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. This Book is wholly Evangelical, wholly *Spiritual*. But I have spoke enough also to this third Proposition. Give me leave to make some application of this discourse.

Use 1. In the first place, Let me speak to all of you, who shall hear my further discourses concerning any part of this Book, (as *once* God spake to *Moses* at the Burning Bush) *Put off thy Shoes from off thy Feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* While I shall be opening those figurative expressions, by which it pleaseth the Holy Ghost (by *Solomon*) to discourse these *Spiritual Loves*; ——— *Procul O procul este profani.* Saint *Paul* (to *Titus*) saith, *Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving; there is nothing pure but even their minds, and consciences are defiled.* I am sure it may be said so of every line of holy writ, to the pure heart, every line there is pure: not so to the impure, the reason is because their own minds, and consciences are filthy, and impure. Here is no wantonness in these sacred lines, they contain indeed discourses of loves, but altogether Divine and Spiritual, (though under carnal disguises.) Oh let not your wanton hearts bring hither any unclean thoughts.

Use 2. *Secondly*, Methinks much of what I have said, may engage your minds to *attention* to me, while I shall indeavour to unfold the Spiritual mysteries in this Book.

1. *The Penman of this Book was* Solomon. The name of a King, (amongst men) carries with it a great reverence, and authority, but *Solomon* was no ordinary King, the Lord gave him such a degree of wisdom, that none before or after him, were ever like unto him, 2 *Chron.* 1. 12. The *Queen of Sheba* thought it worth her travel to come from the utmost parts of the world, to be his auditor, and went away, admiring his wisdom; nay more, he was one *whom the Lord loved*, thence he had his name *Jedidiah*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 24, 25. we may therefore expect to hear the secrets of the Lord from his mouth, rather than from another man; When the disciples, *Joh.* 13. 23.

were

were at loss for an *interpretation* of what Christ said, they beckned to the Disciple *whom he loved*, to inquire his meaning, and were presently satisfied: further yet, he was an *eminent Type of Christ*. It is *Solomon* that speaks, but he speaks as the Organ of Christ, ὅτ⊖ ὀργάνῳ τῷ Σολομῶντι χρησάμενο⊖ ὁ ἐκείνῳ πᾶν διαλέγεται, saith *Greg. Nyss.* Christ useth *Solomon* as his instrument, and by him speaks to us. But this brings me to a second Consideration as much engaging you to attention, and far more than the former.

2. A greater than *Solomon is here*. *Solomon* speaks in this Song *in the Person of Christ*, and Christ by him here speaketh unto you: *Solomon*'s hand holds the Pen, but Christ guides his hand to every letter in this sacred Song.

3. Nor was this holy Song (as you have heard) composed in *Solomons* time of deviation from God, that indeed would have weakned the authority of it; but either in the former part of his life before he went astray from God: or in the latter part, when he was again returned unto him; be it which it will, we are by it strongly engaged to the study, and understanding of it, as it from a great experience informeth a gracious soul, to what degree of communion with God it may arrive, and what sweet intercourses (even in this life) betwixt Christ and a believing Soul are attainable by that Soul that followeth after them, whether in its Virgin State, before it hath more notoriously estranged itself from God, or upon a true repentance after eminent backslidings.

4. *The exceeding sweetness, and spirituality of the matter, highly commends it to every spiritual heart*: There is no part of the Word of God, but is exceedingly sweet, and precious, the historical part of it is so, for if it be pleasant to read the Histories of Nations, and Kingdoms, *&c.* how much more sweet should it be to every gracious Soul, to read and understand the series of Divine Providences towards that People, whom (above all the Nations of the Earth) he set apart for himself, whom he miraculously conducted, and for them made his holy Arm so eminently bare in the sight of all the Nations of the world: The preceptive part of the Word of God (which we call the Law) is also exceeding precious to a gracious Soul (it was so to *David*, sweeter than the Hony, or Hony-comb, *&c.*) and St. *Paul* (as to his inward man) delighted in it. But of all the portions of holy writ, the *Gospel part* is most sweet. That which reveals, a *God in Christ reconciling the world to himself*, which tells you what *Christ* is in himself, considered as *Mediator*, *God-man*, &c. which discove-

reth the Excellencies and desirableness of him who is *Totus desideria*; altogether desires. Those parts of Scripture which let us know what Christ is to his poor people, how tender of them, how jealous for them, how condescending, and kind to them, and how dear and precious they are to him: Of all the portions of holy writ *Experience* speaks those most exceeding sweet to us, where *Christ* is set out in the pantings of his heart, and yernings of his bowels towards his poor Children. Such is this portion of holy writ: when we shall have taken off the *Vail of Metaphors*, with which this sacred portion of holy writ is covered, we shall find that there is scarce any portion of holy writ, wherein those sweet, and spiritual mysteries of the Souls union, and Communion with Jesus Christ, are more fully, and affectionately described.

5. The more special form of *it as a Song*, doth likewise commend it to our attention, there is a secret vertue in *Poetry*, engaging Peoples hearts, and affections to attention. If a wanton Love-Song, which discourseth the vertues, and beauty of Creatures, can lay such an hold upon our Ears, and Hearts; what should this Song do! which discourseth the Excellencies of him who is the fairest amongst the Sons of Men, the chiefest of ten thousand, *altogether desires*, and his particular indearments to the Souls of his Creatures, which have no comelines but what he puts upon them; certainly the hearing of these discourses must ravish every spiritual heart. This is the *Song of Songs*.

6. Finally the *Metaphors* with which this excellent Song is clothed, must needs give it a great *advantage* with every ingenuous Soul, which naturally desires the understanding of what is hid from it, we may suppose God therefore to have thus phrased this Spiritual Song, that we might have greater desires kindled in us to understand the mind and will of God revealed in it. The harder the Shell is, the sweeter the Nut will be found, when once the Shell is crack'd.

Use 3. Lastly, What you have heard; may serve you as a Key for the unlocking this whole portion of Scripture, and guide you in the understanding of my future discourses. By *the Beloved* speaking in this Song, you are to understand *the Lord Jesus Christ*. By the *Spouse* (whom he sometimes calleth *his love*) you may understand the *Church*, and more particularly *every truly believing Soul*. By the *Watchmen*, the Ministers of the Church, whom God hath set to watch for Souls. By the *Daughters of Hierusalem* (sometimes mentioned) either the *Members of the Church*, or the *Neighbours of it*.

The

The two first have the *greatest share* in the *Song*, the others sometimes speak, and are sometime spoken to. But this is enough to have spoken by way of preface, 'Tis time to leave the threshold, and to enter in to this pleasant House.

Only give me leave as an Epilogue to this discourse to subjoin the Judgment of *Ludovicus de Ponte* (though a *Papist*, yet a learned Man) who hath copiously interpreted this Spiritual Song, and (allowing him the *Popish Devotion* for the *Sacred Virgin*, which makes them all think they see her in every Text) hath done much in it well. It is prefix'd to his *Latine Commentary*. To this purpose.

"The Book of *Solomon* (which from the nobleness of the Argument is called the Song of Songs) is, a spiritual conference "betwixt that God, who is *three* and yet *one*, or betwixt Christ "who is true God, and Man, and his Church, whether ancient or "modern: and every gracious Soul which is a Member of that "Church. In which discourse God hath a double part, and personateth two several Persons: The person of a most wise *Instructer* "or *Master*: delivering to his Disciple the sublime Doctrine of "Faith and Holiness. 2. The Person of a most *endeared lover*, extolling and courting his most beloved Spouse, with wonderful "praises; and enriching her with great gifts and favours: The "Church also represents a double Person. 1. The Person of a "Disciple, or Spouse, *towards* God, or the Person of a Mistress, or "companion towards other Souls which she calls *the Daughters of* "*Hierusalem*.

"The Argument of this Conference, as well became "such Persons, is sublime, pleasant, profitable, and abundantly copious, for whatsoever the ancient Prophets sang, "whatsoever the Evangelists afterwards related; or the Apostles Preached, whether relating to the mysteries of faith, or "to holiness, and Gospel perfection, it is all in this Song comprehended in the style of lovers; (the style being Spiritual not Carnal.) But because the Metaphors and Similitudes, which fill this "whole Book, are taken from Carnal Marriages. We must pill off "the bark, that the letter might not kill. That being once taken "off, the spiritual part lying within, will enlighten the Soul, and "quicken, and inflame and perfect it. For according to our Saviours words, it is the Spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth "nothing: and the words of this Song are Spirit, and life, to those

" those who do sincerely consider them. For as the Ancient Priests
Macch. 1. 20. " of the Jews (as we read in the Book of *Macchabees*) when they
" looked for the sacred fire, which they had hidden, found nothing
" but thick water, which water (to the admiration of all) when the
" Sun shined out of the Cloud again, was turned into fire: so he
" who looks upon the Book of *Canticles* with carnal Eyes, will on-
" ly find the puddle-water of words, which the outside letter seem-
" eth to shew, which will fill his heart with darkness instead of light,
" with a carnal chilling instead of spiritual heat. But if the di-
" vine Sun inlightens, that which seemed puddle water, will become
" coelestial fire, wonderfully inlightning the understanding, and
" inflaming the will. ------

" But although the whole Book of *Canticles* containeth 8 Chap-
" ters, and by Interpreters be divided into three, five, or more
" parts, yet I believe the first, and second Chapters are a sum, or bre-
" viary of all those mysteries of Faith, which are contained in the six
" other Chapters; which is evidenced from this, that the close of
" the second and of the last Chap. are much the same, to shew us,
" that the narration of matter is finished in the second Chapter,
" and that from the third Chapter beginneth a new discourse of the
" same mysteries under new Metaphors, and Similitudes.

Dis-

Discourses of Divine Love

BETWEEN

CHRIST and the CHURCH.

From the first Chap. of the Song of *Solomon.*

Serman I.

Cant. 1. 2, 3. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth: for his loves are better then Wine.* V. 3. Because of the savour of thy good Ointments. *Thy name is as an Ointment poured forth: therefore do the Virgins love thee.*

I Have observed in my prefatory discourse, that some have fancied that this Book is called *The Song of Songs*, because it contains several Songs in it: It is in our Bibles divided into 8 Chapters, and by Interpreters into several periods, according to their particular fancies. *Ludovicus De Ponte* conceives, as I shewed you, that the two first Chapters contain a Breviary of all the rest: and as an evidence of it, alledgeth the same close both of the second, and eighth Chap-

Chapter: and from the third Chapter he thinks there begins a repetition of the same spiritual mysteries, under new Metaphors, whether that notion (in the extent of it) be true or no: doubtless the two first Chapters contain much spiritual Doctrine, informing us in the near communion betwixt the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the *believing Soul*. A learned Interpreter distributes this Chapter into two parts, the first he calls *Proœmium*, a Preface, the second *Colloquium*, a Conference betwixt the two great Interlocutors in this spiritual discourse.

In the former you have two things. 1. A *Prayer*. 2. An *Apology*. The first in v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7. The second (as a *Parenthesis*) v. 5, 6. The *Prayer* consisteth of three *Petitions*, each of which is urged by suitable arguments. The first petition is v. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth.* The second, v. 4. *Draw me.* The 3d is v. 7. *Tell me O thou whom my Soul loveth*, &c. *where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.* The further distribution of the Chapter, and the several verses in it, I shall leave, until I come in order to them.

My Text containeth *the first Petition*, with an *argument annexed*. The petition in those *words*. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth.* The argument in the latter words, *for his love is better then Wine.* For the just understanding of the words, we must consider, 1. *Who it is that speaketh.* 2. *To whom the Speech is directed.* 3. what the import of the Petition is.

1. As to the first our *Translation* puts it out of doubt, and it is as universally agreed amongst Interpreters, that the Person speaking is *she* who throughout the whole Song bears the Person of the Spouse, by which (having already rejected the notions of those who understand *Pharaohs Daughter*, or the *Shulamite*, as also of those who restrain it to the *Jewish Church*) must be understood; either *the Church in the general*, or the *believing Soul* in particular, who here speaketh.

2. Either to the *Bridegroom* [the *Lord Jesus Christ*] or to *God*, the Father of this Bridegroom, whose it is to *bless us with all spiritual blessings, in and through him.* Supposing the latter, the believing Soul directeth her request, as her *beloved* directeth (when he commands us to pray, saying, *Our Father.*) If the petition be understood, as directed to the Lord Jesus Christ: *Let him kiss me*, is as much as, *Do thou kiss me. Vicem nominis supplet vis amoris*, the force of her love supplyeth the omission of his name (saith *Lud. de Ponte.*) It is a very usual dialect of Scripture, to put the 3d Person for the 2d:

so

so the Psalmist: *God be merciful unto us, and bless us.* But

3. *Qu.* What doth the Spouse mean by *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth?*

Some read it, *He did kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth.* Thus the ancient *Chaldee Paraphrast. Blessed be the name of the Lord, who gave us his Law, written by the hand of* Moses *his Scribe, who wrote it in two Tables of Stone; and spake with us face to face, as a man who kisseth his Companions: through the greatness of his love wherewith he loved us more than threescore, and ten Nations.* But the stile of the Song is rather *pathetical* and *optative*, than *historical* and *narrative*: and it is rather referred to Christ as Mediator, than to *God the Father*, or the *Lord Jesus Christ*, considered (only) as *God over all blessed for ever*; besides that the *Hebrew* word (being in the future tense) referrs rather to the time to come, than to the time past, and I see no need of inventing a figure.

ישקני
a
נשק

There is a threefold kiss, of which you read in Scripture. 1. *The kiss of the feet.* Thus the penitent Woman, *Luk.* 7. 38. *kissed her Saviours feet.* 2. *The kiss of the hand,* Job 31. 27. *If my mouth hath kissed my hand.* 3. *The kiss of the lips.* Prov. 24 26. and so in many other Texts.

Luke 7. 38.
Job 31. 27.
Prov. 24. 26.

The Schoolmen tell us of a seven-fold kiss: a kiss of 1. *Love* 2. *Union.* 3. *Reverence* and *Honour.* 4. *Adoration.* 5. *Reconciliation* and *Peace.* 6. *Treachery*, as *Joab* kissed *Abner* and *Amasa*, and *Judas* kissed *Christ.* 7. *Wantonness.*

According to the usages of several Nations, there were several sorts of kisses, distinguished by their objects, and ends, they were wont to kiss the head, lips, cheek, shoulders, hands, backs, feet, of their superiours, inferiours, and equals, and that for several testimonies, which yet (I think) are reducible to two heads.

1.

For a testimony of *honour*, *reverence*, and *subjection.* Thus Parents were kissed by their Children: *Jacob* came near and *kissed Isaac*, *Gen.* 50. 1. *Joseph fell upon his Fathers face, and kissed him.* Thus *Exod.* 18. 7. *Moses* went out to meet his Father in Law, *and did obeysance and kissed him*, and *Orpah kissed her Mother in Law*: Thus the *Persians* were wont (according to the differences of Persons in respect of quality) to give differing kisses. Equals kissed one anothers *lips*, the Person who was but a little inferiour, kissed *his superiours Cheek.* The lower sort fell at their superiours *feet*, *and kissed them*: Thus Idolaters shewed their reverence to their Idols, and the true Worshipers of God were by this distinguished. — *They*

Gen. 50. v. 1.
Exod. 18. 7.
Ruth 1. 14.

1 Kings 19. 28. *had not kissed Baal,* 1 *Kings* 19. 28. and the Idolaters in *Israel,* said. *Let the men that sacrifice kiss the Calves,* Hos. 13. 2. Thus also we
Hosea 13. 2. are commanded to *kiss the Son: least he be angry,* Psal. 2. 12. which *Jerome* translates: *Purely worship the Son.* This is now a kiss wherewith we ought to kiss Christ, but this is not the *kiss* of the Text.

2. *Osculum amoris est Symbolum.* Illyr.

Secondly, *Kisses* were used for a *testimony of love,* which sometimes was hypocritical, and so the kissing deceitful, such were the kisses of *Joab* and *Judas,* ordinarily real; which might be considered either as *continued* or *interrupted.* Kisses were 1. Used in token of

1. *continuing love;* As appears by the several precepts of the Apostles
Gen. 31. 55. regulating the use of them, by a law of holiness and chastity, *Rom.* 16. 16. 1 *Cor.* 16. 20. &c. Or 2. In token of *renewed love* and *reconciliation.*

2 Sam 14. 33. Thus *Laban* kissed *Jacob* upon their reconciliation, *Esau* kissed *Jacob,* and *David* kissed *Absalom. Beza* thus gives the propriety of this testimony in affection, *Whereas our life lies in the breath which goeth out of our lips, and our Soul goes away, when our breath at last goes; the joining of the friends lips and mouths, signifies, that they are so dear each to other, that they could willingly unite Souls, (if it could be) and bestow their lives each upon other.*

Beza in 2. Hom. in Cant.

The kiss of the text, must needs be this. *In testimonium amoris, for a testimony of love.* But still here remains a question: whether she desires the kiss of *Reconciliation.* 2. Or that which *is a pledge of continuing love.*

1. Those who understand the first, *confess a breach betwixt God, and his Creatures,* which indeed there was made, in the beginning of the world, which breach is (as to the meritorious part) made up by the incarnation, death, and passion of Christ. Indeed there was an ancient *Covenant of Grace* concerning it, *Gen.* 3. revealed immediately,
2 Cor. 5. 18. 19. but I say it was done (*quoad pretium*) by the incarnation, and death
Col. 1. 21. of Christ according to those Texts, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19. *Col.* 1. 21.
Eph. 2. 16. *Eph.* 2. 16. according to the prophecy, *Dan.* 9. 24. And (*as to the*
Dan. 9. 24. *particular application of that purchase*) it is daily done by the Spirit of God, working *faith* in us, by which we are united to Christ. Now the question is whether the Spouse here beggeth;

1. *Christs coming in the flesh,* being *incarnate and dying for us,* for the fulfilling of the eternal Covenant of Reconciliation, (to which some encline.)

2. Or, the kiss of *Justification;* the actual reconciliation of the Soul unto Christ, and application of Christ to the Soul by faith.

3. Or, *The further influences of Love, as pledges of that first*

Grace,

Grace, and Seals of that Original love of his to the Souls of his People.

Indeed, the Eternal Son of God kiſſed us (and he ſtooped much to kiſs us) when he took upon him our nature, uniting finite, and infinite, corruptible and incorruptible, when he *notbinged* himſelf for us: and this was foreſeen, and ſo might be deſired (*Abraham* ſaw the day, and rejoyced, *Joh.* 10. 48. and not only *Origen*, and *Bernard* of old, but many modern interpreters, think that the Spouſe here, hath a great reſpect to this matchleſs teſtimony of Divine Love: which being granted, the Text is no other, than the breathings and pantings of the Church of God then living, or the particular members of it, after the *Incarnation* of *Chriſt*, which doubtleſs was a great object of their deſires. *Kings and Prophets, and Righteous men deſired to ſee the things*, which the Diſciples ſaw, and did not ſee them, *&c.* Others underſtand the text of thoſe teſtimonies of Divine Love which followed the death of Chriſt, particularly, *The ſending of the Spirit.* It is true this is called *The promiſe of the Father*; and was ſo under the old Teſtament, *Ezech.* 36. *&c.* and it proceeds from Chriſt, as the great teſtimony of his love, nor indeed doth Chriſt otherwiſe teſtify his ſpecial love, than by the influences of his Spirit: but I cannot tell why we ſhould reſtrain it to the particular diſpenſation in the days of *Pentecoſt*. I think *Piſcator* expreſſeth the ſenſe well by *ſuum erga me amorem patefaciat*, let him manifeſt to me his love: let me know that he loveth me: yet ſuppoſing it the *Reconciled Believing Soul* that ſpeaks: it ſeems rather to be underſtood of *further grace*, than the firſt grace of *regeneration*, and reconciliation unto God, the deſire ſeems to be a deſire of free familiar communion with Chriſt. This ſeems to be the main of her requeſt, the great ſum of her deſires, the uppermoſt of her Souls concernments.

1. Joh. 10. 48. Mat. 13. 17.

2.

3. *Piſcat ad loc.*

But obſerve yet further. She *begs but a kiſs*, not let *him imbrace me*: but *let him kiſs me.* She asketh modeſtly, if (ſaith the woman in the Goſpel) I might but touch the *Hem of his Garment.* Thus the woman of *Canaan* alſo. *Truth Lord: but the Dogs eat the crums.* Thus the Spouſe. If he would but kiſs me: Oh! how precious is the leaſt of Chriſt to a gracious Soul? It is better to be kiſſed by him, than to lie in the worlds arms, to be a *Door-keeper in the Houſe of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.*

---- Quid tam minimum & ſubmiſſum quam Oſculetur me, Oſculo oris ſui. Ludov. de Ponte. *ad loc.*

But thirdly, The word is plural. One kiſs will not ſerve the turn. She is not a ſtranger, but a Spouſe. The plural number either im- ports

3. נשיקות

ports, 1. *Various dispensations of Grace.* Or 2dly, *Repeated influences of the same Grace.* 1. It may be understood, as denoting *various dispensations of Grace*: *Beza* saith the Lord kissed the Soul thrice: 1. *In this life*, when he is by faith united to it. 2. *In the day of death*, when the Soul is taken up into the enjoyment of God. 3. *In the Resurrection*, when Body and Soul shall be united, and together glorified. Another reckons up 7 kisses with which the Lord kisseth his Peoples Souls. The Grace of 1. *Incarnation.* 2. *The descending of the Holy Ghost.* 3. *The preaching of the Gospel.* 4. *Reconciliation to God.* 5. *Sanctification.* 6. *Divine Consolations.* 7. *The kiss of Glory.* And the same Author makes the Spouses petition comprehensive of all these; certain it is, there are various dispensations of Grace, there is *quickning*, *strengthening*, *comforting* Grace: and there may be *frequent repetitions of these to the Soul*, according to its particular wants, and Gods favour towards it, and you may indifferently understand the Text in either sense.

Beza ad loc. Lud. de Ponte *ad loc.*

Fourthly, The Spouse here doth not only desire kisses, but נשקני מנשקות פיהו the kisses of Christs mouth: concerning which observe these 2 things.

1. The kiss of the mouth, was *the highest kiss.* This was the *kiss of Love*, the *kiss of Reconciliation*, *Osculum pacis*, the kiss of the *Hand*, *Feet*, &c. was a kiss of honour and reverence, and subjection: the kiss of the mouth, was the *kiss of love and friendship*, of peace, and reconciliation.

V. Lud. de Ponte, *Origenem* Bezam, Gissard, Ainsworth, *Gl. Ord.* &c. *ad loc.*

2. I find most Interpreters hinting by this expression, something yet more special, *viz. Communion with Christ in his word.* The word indeed is the fruit of the lips, and cometh out of the mouth, and God may seem (in some propriety of speech) to kiss the Soul with the kisses of *his mouth*, when he speaks to it in his word: *The Lord will speak peace to his people*, (saith the *Psalmist*) and *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace,* (saith the Lord by his Prophet *Isaiah*) some expositors to further this notion have observed that the word נשק signifies sometimes to *instruct*, but I cannot find that usage of it in holy writ. Grace is poured forth upon Christs *lips*; she desires those *kisses*, some drive the notion higher; observing the difference between the *Doctrine of the Law, and that of the Gospel*: the first is terrible, the second sweet, and comfortable: holding forth nothing but the love of God in Jesus Christ, *reconciling the* world to himself, not imputing their sins: hence the Gospel is called *The word of reconciliation.*

Lastly,

Lastly. She saith *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.* 5.
She desires not only to hear the Doctrine of the gospel, but that Christ should *speak it to her.* The Preacher speaks to the Ear, Christ to the heart: *Quoties ergo in corde nostro, quod de divinis dogmatibus, sensibusq; quærimus, absq; monitoribus invenimus, toties oscula nobis, à Sponso esse data verbo Dei credimus* (saith *Origen*) so often as we find God by his word Speaking to our hearts, so often doth our beloved kiss us with the kisses of his mouth. Origen. ad loc.

This is sufficient to have spoken for the Explication of the matter of the Text. There onely remains something more circumstantial to be observed.

The words are *Vox Sponsæ.* The Voice of the Spouse. According to the civil usage of our Country, (and I think most others) the Lover speaks first. Here the Spouse begins; It is so betwixt God and the soul; *Christ speaks first.* He is found of those that *seek him not* and *of those that enquire not after him.* He first loves us, and our Love to him proceedeth from his Love first manifested to us: But you must not understand her that speaks as one that is a stranger, and in a state of disunion, with her beloved: but as one that is already espoused; and made a Spiritual Bride: not desiring *first grace*: but *further grace*, which she needeth as well as the first grace, for he giveth both to *will, and to do*, he is both the *author* and the *finisher* of *faith*, and other grace. 1. 4.

Secondly, The words are *Vox Volentis.* The Language of a willing Soul, Willing that Christ should come near unto it, and take it up into fellowship, and communion with himself. God's people are a willing people. They are indeed made so by a divine power. *Psal.* 101. 2. But *Certum est nos velle cum velumus* (saith *Aug.*) It is God who makes us of unwilling, Willing. When he hath had his first work upon our wills, and subdued that strong hold unto himself: Then we are willing. Nay more; 2.

Thirdly, They are *Vox cupientis.* The voice of a *panting Soul*, not barely content that Christ should kiss it, but passionately *desiring his kisses.* They are as much as, *Oh! that he would kiss me.* Every gracious Soul passionately desireth fellowship, and Communion with *Jesus Christ*: Oh! (saith holy *David*) *when wilt thou come to me?* Neither is this all, the words are not onely to be considered as a good wish, or passionate desire, but as a fervent prayer. 3.

Lastly therefore, they are *Vox supplicantis.* the Language of a praying soul, where observe, 4.

What

1. *What she beggs:* Not riches, not honour, not pleasures, not τὰ βιωτικὰ, but τὰ πνευματικὰ, not the good things of fortune: but the riches of grace: her Petition is like that of *David*, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me*, *Psal.* 4. 6. Let others take the *ring*; let her have but the *kiss*, and it is sufficient for her; but single influences of Grace will not serve her turn, every look of grace is sweet, and frequent influences of Grace are necessary for her.

2. Secondly, Observe *How she begs:* 1. *Reverently.* Let him kiss
1. me. Thus we ought to draw nigh to God, *with Reverence, and Godly fear.* Reverence becomes the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth, those that come without it towards God, understand not his great-
2. ness. 2. She begs *humbly.* But *a kiss.* The crumbs that fall from the Lords Table, the touch of the Hem of his Garment, any thing
3. of Jesus Christ, that may but argue distinguishing love. 3. She asketh *boldly*, not *rudely* but *boldly.* Thus we ought to come to the Throne of Grace with an *holy boldness*, the boldness of faith, the word is in the future tense, and may be translated. *He shall kiss me, or he will kiss me.* His Majesty requires reverence. His promise
4. gives boldness and confidence. 4. Lastly, she asketh *fervently.* There is a bluntness discernable in the form, [*Let him kiss me,*] which speaketh the Souls *fervency.* Besides the *trina repetitio*, repeating the same thing by three terms, denotes (as *Lud. de Ponte* observes) *flagrantissimum cordis affectum.* The most flagrant, earnest desire of the Spouses heart.

I have thus far opened to you the Spouses first Petition, in which the believing Soul, with a *Reverent, holy, humble boldness*, yet with all possible *fervency*, begs of the Lord Jesus Christ, [her Spiritual Husband] some special distinguishing token of his love, more especially a near fellowship with him, in his ordinances, and the sealing up of his love to her soul, in Gospel Doctrines.

1. *Argu.* This first petition she presseth with a double Argument. 1. The first drawn *from the Excellency of his love.* This she sets out, *per modum comparationis:* comparing it with *Wine*, and preferring it before it. 2. Comparing the name of Christ with *Ointment*, and that not shut up in a box, but *poured out. Thy name is as an Ointment poured forth, v.* 3.

2. *Argu.* Her 2d Argument is drawn from her *Love to her Beloved*; in the close of the third *v. The Virgins love thee*, and the cause of this love is expressed to be the *savour of his good Ointments.* Because of the *savour*, &c.

Let

Let me open the terms by which these Arguments are expressed: כִּי טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן.

We translate it, because *thy loves are better than Wine:* what we translate *Loves*, the *Septuagint* translate μαζοί σου, whom the *Vulg. Lat.* and the *Arab. Interp.* follow. [Thy Breasts] the *Syriack* translate it *Bowels*, otherwise there is no difference in the Translations.

Delrio tells us that *Alanus* (an Ancient Interpreter) makes these words, not the continued speech of the Spouse, pressing her Petition by an Argument, but the reply of her beloved to her, assuring her of his love, and that *he valued her Breasts*, above all things: That which (probably) led him into this mistake, was his interpreting the word דֹּדֶיךָ as if it were דַּדַּיִךְ Breasts, and not understanding how in any propriety of Speech, the Spouse could commend the Breasts of her beloved, they being parts, from which usually, the woman, not the man is commended (in ordinary Speech) but as the whole stream of Interpreters runs another way: so this seemeth to be no constraining argument, to enforce us to acknowledge such a sudden and a *subitam, & abruptam verborum commutationem*, (as *Delrio* calls it) abrupt change of words, as this interpretation must necessarily infer. For 1.

Though it be true that דד signifies a breast, *Ezek.* 23. 3. v. 21. yet רוד signifies beloved: And *loves* in the *Abstract*, and so it is translated, *Ezek.* 16. 8. it was a time of love. 2.

Suppose we should allow more authority to the *Septuagint*, than to our *Hebrew Text* (for which there is no reason) yet it is not improper to assert these the words, of the Spouse speaking to her beloved: for although the God of Nature, intending the woman for the Nurse hath provided that sex with larger breasts: yet the man hath breasts also, and such (if you will believe the Philosopher) as may have milk in them.

However, he who runs, may read the expression *figurative. Amoris sedes est in corde, & in uberibus quæ cordi adhærescunt.* The heart is the seat of love, and the Breasts are nigh to the heart, and this evidenceth the difference of Interpreters, as to the translation of the word, as to this Text, to be but a word-bate for *Ubera tua*, and *Amores tui*, Thy Breasts, or *thy loves*, are much the same thing in signification. 3. *Genebrardus ad loc.*

Neither lastly is this the only Text in Scripture, where the *breasts* of men are mentioned (if we should be constrained to that sense, *Isaiah* 60. 16. *Thou shalt suck the Breast of Kings*, so also God is said: 4.

said to *bear his People from the Belly, and to carry them from the Womb.* They are Metaphorical expressions, and it is granted on all hands, that if our Interpreters, (with whom concur most modern Interpreters) have not hit the literal signification of the word: yet they have not missed the sense, in translating it, *Thy Loves.*

2. By which Interpreters generally understand, either the *private influences of Grace*, with which God refresheth the particular Souls of his Saints, or: The publick *ordinances and institutions of the Gospel*, by which God expresseth his love to his Church in general, and every believing Soul in particular.

1. Some understand Divine *institutions.* Ordinances are indeed the Breasts at which Christ suckleth his Children, those means by and through which he conveyeth the streams of his love to them: and there is a great excellency in them. *David* prefers a day in *Christ's Courts, before a* 1000 *elsewhere. Origen* observes, that in some copies instead of *quia ubera tua*, &c. it was *quia loquelæ tuæ*, thy Speeches *are better than Wine*, which also excellently suits with the former expression. *The kisses of his mouth.* This sense in the general notion of it much pleaseth many Interpreters, though something divided in their more particular notions. *Origen* interprets it, *Dogmata tua*, thy Doctrines, and seems indifferently to understand it of the *Doctrine of the Law*, or *of the Gospel.* The Popish Interpreters reading it *Breasts*, expound it concerning the two *Testaments*, so *Genebrard*, &c. Others interpret it more strictly concerning the *sweet Doctrine* of the Gospel, which Saint *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. compareth unto *Milk*, which *as new born Babes*, we ought to *desire*, and concerning the Apostles and Prophets, which were the first Instruments which God made use of to convey that Doctrine to us: The sweetness of the Gospel (saith *Aquinas*) is meant here, by which (as with Milk) those who are Babes in Christ are nourished. Mr. *Brightman* (making this the Speech of the Jewish Church) understands it of the *Doctrine of the Law*, which also suiteth with *David's* high commendation of the Law of God, in his 119 *Psal.* and in the 119. more largely.

Non autem latet quod in quibusdam exemplaribus pro eo quod legimus. Quia bona sunt ubera tua super vinum, invenimus Scriptum, quia bone sunt loquele tue super vinum Origen: Hom. 1. *super* Cantica *in v.* 3.

2. But (reading it [*Loves:*]) possibly they may better interpret it, who understand it *concerning the Graces of Gods Holy Spirit.* When we speak of the *Grace of Christ*, we either understand, *that goodness which is essentially in him*, as he is the fountain of all Grace; *full of Grace and Truth* (the fulness of the God-Head dwelling in him) or *that goodness which he communicateth to his People*, in the free pardon of their sins, and acceptation of their Persons; Or 3dly. Those *fruits of his Spirit* which abide and dwell in us, such as faith, love. I find

I find some Interpreters both ancient, and modern, interpreting the Text of the latter: So *Gregorius Mag.* That love to thee, and to my Brethren, which thou hast wrought in my heart; But *Beza* observeth. That it is not usual, to Saints to commend their own graces, and therefore doubtless it is to be understood of that *Grace*, which is and remains in Christ *Subjectively*, of which we are the *Objects*; and to this sense agree the most sober, and spiritual Interpreters: making the phrase to signify that sweet pleasure which the Soul takes from the feeling of Christs *love*. And possibly this is that *Vis lactandi*, that suckling vertue, which *Delrio* mentioneth, which Christs puts forth, refreshing the Souls of his Saints with his *consolations*. Gregor. ad loc.

The word is in the plural number: by which the Hebrews were wont not onely to express a multitude of things, but also the infinite vertues, and dimensions of any thing. You must not think (saith *Beza*) That in the One Essence of God there are more numerical loves No; in him all things are one, and he is one. But his grace is manifold, in respect of our feeling, and apprehension: and he deals out his love to us in different measures according to our different necessities or capacities.

The *Chaldee Paraphrast* with some of the *Heb. Doctors*, understand here the Concret, by the Abstract, and interpret *God's loves*, to be his *beloved people* of the Jewish Nation; whom he preferreth before *Wine*, *viz.* before any other Nations, threescore and ten Nations; to which purpose, by their Cabalistical Art they have found out the numerical letters for 70 in the word which we translate *Wine*. But I shall not insist upon so fond, and improbable a Notion.

Having therefore spoken. Enough for the Explication of the Subject, *Thy loves*; Let us indeavour to understand what is prædicated of this Subject.

טובים מיין.

They are better then Wine] *good before wine*, saith *the* Heb. *Text*, which is but the same thing in their dialect, who so use (ordinarily) to express the *Comparative degree*.

1. *Good* (in the Philosophical notion of it) is whatsoever is the Object of our desire, the nature of it lying in a *convenience and suitableness of the thing unto our natures* which makes it desirable; which a thing may be either upon the account of pleasure or profit, or nobleness. Accordingly the *Heb.* word טוב is variously translated; *merry*, *Esther* 1. 10. *Beautiful*, *Ruth* 3. 7. Thy loves are more good, *i. e.* more sweet, pleasant, profitable than *Wine*. 1.

2. *Wine* (in its primary signification) is the *juice of the Grape*, whose proper Effect it is to make the heart of man merry *Psal.* 104. 15. But this were too low a signification for it in this Text. We must therefore allow a *figure*. The Hebrews were wont under the notion of wine, to express all other delectable, and pleasant things. Hence *Ahashuerus* his feast is called *A Banquet of Wine*; though it cannot be imagined, that Wine was all the guests had for their intertainment. It is an usuall *Synecdoche*, to express all things that fall under a common *genus*, by some Eminent *Species*. Some of the ancient *Rabbies*, understood by Wine here *quamcunq; Lætitiam*; whatsoever is pleasant and acceptable. And in that sence *Mercer*, and the best of modern Interpreters agree. For that other interpretation, which some make of it, who understand by *loves*, Gospel Doctrine, and by [Wine] the *Doctrine and dispensation of the Law* though it seemeth to have some advantage, by the use of Wine, in the legal oblations, and it be a truth, That the *Doctrine*, and *dispensation* of the Gospel being more *sweet* and *perfect*, is better than that of the Law which *brought nothing to perfection*. Yet I cannot think it the sense of this Text.

2. *R. Sol. Jerchi in Genebrard.*

Num. 15. 5. Hos. 9. 4.

Heb. 9. 1.

Let us conclude then, that the words are the Language *Either of the Church of God* preferring the injoyment of God *in the Doctrines, and dispensations of his word and Gospel*: or *the words of the believing Soul* preferring *the influences of divine grace*, before the *sweetest of all creatures comforts*. And this I take to be the most free and consistent sense, and interpretation of the words.

The particle ב may be conceived here to have a double use.

1. Either *To give a reason of her former desire*, that her beloved should *kiss her with the kisses of his mouth*; Which she professeth to be like theirs, who desire wine: They desire that because *it is good*. She desires these because there is a far greater goodness in these heavenly influences, than there is in the best of created comforts: by which she shews that she was not carried out to these desires *insano quodam affectu, sed prudente consilio* (saith *Beza* by prudent advice, and deliberation; reason dictating to us, the choice and desire of the things, which are most excellent: Not by an heady and misguided passion.

1. *Nunc autem ne videatur insano quodam affectu rapi, sed plane prudenti consilio*, &c. Beza in Cant. Hom. 1.

2. Or else to make an argument which might be advantageous to her for the obtaining of her request; drawn from the Estimate of Christs love with which her Soul was possessed: *Lord I esteem thy favour to me above all created comforts in the world*: *Therefore let not my Soul*

want it. And so it suteth with that of David *Psal.* 4. 6. *Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than the time that* their Corn, and Wine increased. And thus these latter words of the Text contain the Spouses first Argument, by which she urgeth her petition mentioned in the former part of it. She proceedeth *v.* 3. Psal. 4. 6.

V. 3. *Because of the Savour of thy Ointments: Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the Virgins love thee.* V. 3.

The Sept. translate it thus Καὶ ὀσμὴ μύρων σου ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ἀρώματα Μύρον ἐκκενωθὲν ὄνομά σου διὰ τοῦτο νεάνιδες ἠγάπησάν σε.

The Vulg. Latine joyneth the former part of this verse to the former thus; *Thy breasts perfumed with the best ointments are better than Wine.*

The difference is not much, nor is it an easy labour, to determine it, because the points and stops which make it, are of no great antiquity, (at least as some think) the Hebrew (translated for a word) seemeth to be thus: *To the smell of thy good Ointments. Thy name is as Oil, or Ointment poured out. Therefore do the Virgins love.* לריח This seemeth to be (in our dialect) an harsh sense, and the connexion is not clear. To help it therefore *Piscator* translateth it *Quod attinet ad odorem*, &c. As to what belongs to the savour of thy good Ointments, *&c.* The *Tigurine* Version make the middle words as a *Parenthesis*, and translate it thus: *For the smell of thy good Ointments* (for thy name is as an Ointment poured out.) *Therefore do the Virgins love thee.*

The only question is whether the Spouses design in these words be to give a reason why her beloved had such an *excellent name.* viz. *because of the savour of his good Ointments.* Or to give a *reason* why *the Virgins loved him*; or of both these together: I think of both. The words will bear it. But let us come to enquire the import of the words more particularly.

[לריח שמניך טובים] The thing spoken of is *Ointments*, these are said to be 1. *Good*, and 2. to have a *Smell.* The *Hebrew* word, from which the word [here translated Ointments] שמן cometh, signifies to be fat, *Deut.* 32. 15. *Jeshurun waxed fat.* שמנת *Jer.* 5. 4. This word properly signifieth fatness, and usually signifieth *Oil* or *Ointment*, because of the pinguid nature of those things; so *Prov.* 21. 20. *Hos.* 2. 5. The word signifieth any kind of fatness, whether caused by *Nature or Art.* But it is not here to be taken literally; he needs no Oils, nor sweet Ointments, to make him sweet. Pro. 21. Hos. 2.

But you must know that those Eastern Countries abounded with plenty of Spices, and other sweet ingredients, of which several compounds were made, *Oils, and Ointments*, which were exceedingly grateful to the outward senses; of which they made both a *Religious* and a *Civil use*. They made a Religious use of them; 1. In *Sacrifices*. 2. In *Consecrations*.

1. *Oil* was used in *Sacrifices*: Especially in such as were *Eucharistical*. Hence you read of the *Oil of gladness*, (for it testified *joy and gladness*.) The first use of it in this kind, of which you read in Scripture was *Gen* 28. 18. When God had preserved *Jacob* in the Night, in token of his thankfulness, he took the stone upon which he had slept, and set it up for a *pillar*, and *powred Oil upon it*, he did the like again *Gen.* 35. 14 whether it were done, as a note of the *consecration of the place*, to the service of God, or an *Eucharistical Sacrifice*, may possibly be questioned by some, but the latter seemeth to me most probable, considering the subsequent use of Oil (under the law) to this purpose, of which you may read in *Leviticus* Ch. 2. *v.* 1. 3. 4. It was not lawful, in offerings which were to *bring iniquity to remembrance. Numb.* 5. 15. No testimony of Joy might there be shewn.

Gen. 28. 18.

Gen. 35. 14.

Num. 5. 15.

2. It was also used in *Consecrations of persons*; and that either to the *Kingly*, *Priestly*, or *Prophetical* Office. *Samuel* used Oil in the anointing both of *Saul*, & *David* to the Kingly Office. The same you read also in the anointing of *Jehu*, 2 King. 10. 3. *Elisha* the Prophet was anointed. So was the High Priest. You have a description of the Oil, and a particular Precept, and direction for the composition of it, *Exod.* 30. 22. This was called the *holy anointing Oil*, with which *Aaron* and *his Sons were anointed*. The *Tabernacle* (also) and *the Ark*, with all things belonging to them, were to be anointed with it, as you will find in that Chapter.

1 Sam. 10. 2.
Ch. 16. 11.
13.
1 Kings 10. 3.
Exod. 30. 22.

Besides this Sacred use of Oil there was also a civil, and ordinary use of it. Thus they used it either for bodily nourishment; the widow 1 *Kings* 17. 12. Told the Prophet that she had but a *little Oil in the cruse*. Or, 2. *For delight and pleasure*, as we now use our sweet powders, our dry, and liquid perfumes. *Joab* chargeth the woman of *Tekoah* (being to personate a mourner) not to *anoint her self with Oil*. *Esther* and the other Maids, that were to be brought before *Ahashuerus*; were (for 6 months) to be *perfumed with Oils*. Christ complains of *Simon* that he *had not anointed his head with Oil*. *Mary* anointed *Christ with Oil*, or *Ointment*, *Joh.* 11. 2. and the Woman poured out a Box of *Ointment*, *Spikenard upon his head*. Now

Kings 17.
ech. 16. 13.
2 3. 7.
m. 14. 2.
er 2. 12.
e 7. 46.

Now from this civil and sacred use of Oil, and the effects, the terms of *Oil*, and *Ointment*, and *Anointing* are also used *metaphorically* in Scripture. Thus *Oil* and *Ointments* in Scripture signify the graces of Gods Spirit, and Anointing signifies that gracious Divine Act by which we are made partakers of those graces. To this sense the Psalmist speaketh, *God hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy fellows*, *Psal.* 45. 7. which the Apostle applieth to Christ, *Heb.* 1. 9. and St. *John* expoundeth, saying, *The Spirit was not given unto him by measure*, which is plainly expressed, *Acts* 10. 38. *God hath anointed Jesus of* Nazareth *with the Holy Ghost, and with power.* And as the *holy anointing Oil* (under the old Law) *wetted not* Aarons *head alone*, but *ran down upon the Skirts of his Garment*, so this holy (metaphorical) Oil doth also. Hence as *David* said, *Psal.* 92. 10. *Thou hast anointed me with fresh Oil*; and the People of God then were called the Lords *anointed*. So (under the New Testament) the Children of God are said to have an unction, & it is said that this *Anointing abideth in them.* Thus that of St. *John* is made good, *Of his fulness we have received grace for grace.* By Christs *Ointments*, we understand then, the *Grace that was poured out upon him, and which dwelleth in him*: and in this sense I find the generality of sober Expositors agreed.

Psal. 45. 7. Heb. 1. 9. Joh. 3. Acts 10. 38. Psal. 133. Psal. 92. 10.

Now these Ointments are said to be טוֹבִים good, the signification of which term, I opened to you before, and when I come to the propositions of Doctrine, I shall more particularly shew you the goodness of them in every notion of good. But these Ointments, are also said to cast a Savour. --*At the savour of thy good Ointments.*

A smell or savour is *Qualitas olfactu sensibilis*, some quality of a thing which we discern by our external sense of *smelling*, being conveyed to us by the mediation of the Air: By the smell of Christs Graces, we can understand nothing else, than the *Spiritual sense of the love of Christ*, which by the mediation, and breathing of the holy Spirit of God is discerned by the Soul. The word in the Hebrew signifies any perception of a thing, it is used, *Isa.* 11. *v.* 3. where it is said of Christ, that the Spirit of the Lord (resting upon him) shall make him (as we translate it) *of a quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*: the Hebrew is he shall be smelled, in the fear of the Lord. And *Judg.* 16. 9. we translate it, *when it toucheth the fire*, the Hebrew word is the same, *when it smelleth the fire*; that is, when the fire cometh to it: when it hath any sense of the fire. I conclude then; that as Christs Ointments are the graces with which

Isa. 11. 2. לריח והרירהו

he

he is filled: So the savour of these Ointments, is nothing else than the souls perception, and sense of that Christ, by the mediation of the holy Spirit of God, breathing his grace, and love upon the Souls of his People. And this is sufficient to have spoken for the explication of this first phrase. It follows, שֶׁמֶן תּוּרַק שִׁמְךָ *Thy name is as an Ointment poured forth*, Job speaking of God saith, *what is his name? and what is his Sons name?* Let us enquire a little concerning the name of Christ in this Text.

A name is an appellation given to some person, or thing, either to express the nature, and being of it; or to distinguish it from another thing. God cannot properly be said to have a name, because no term can fully explicate to us his divine essence. But yet God is pleased in some little measure to make himself known to us: Now whatsoever God thus makes himself known unto us by, that is his name: More particularly: The second Person in the holy Trinity, considered as our Mediator, and in reference to the great work of mans redemption, had several names: *One* expressing the two natures which were united in that Divine Person, that was his name *Emanuel*, which signifieth God with us. Another expressing the great work which he had to do, *viz. To save his People from their sins*, therefore his name was called *Jesus*. A third expressing his designation & consecration to his Office; thus he was called *Messiah* and *Christ*, both signifying the same thing *Anointed*. *Gregory* understands it of the name Christ, and the name *Messiah*, so doth *Lud. de Ponte*. *Genebrard*, *Lyra*, and others of the name Jesus.

IV. Greg. *mag. ad loc.*
V. Genebr. *ad loc.*
Lud. de Ponte *ad loc.*
Lyra *ad loc.*

But I know no reason why we should dispute so nicely for the *particular name*, when as Christ had several names, either expressive of his *Divine*, *or Human nature*, *or of his personal capacity*, as both Natures were united in him: or else *expressing the vertues and graces of his Person*: or else *relating to one or another*, *or all his sacred Offices*; and indeed what is said in the Text, is true concerning every name of Christ as well as another: Each of his names is, *As an Ointment poured forth*. And besides I see a more comprehensive interpretation of the term equally true with this: *Thy name. Whatsoever thou art made known by unto us*; thy word, ordinances, grace, gospel, it is all like *Oil* poured forth, תּוּרַק the word translated *poured forth*, cometh from the Hebrew *Radix* תּוּק he hath *emptied*, or *exhausted*. Christs name is compared to Oil, & to Oil emptied, & poured out.

תּוּרַק

a.

Oyl in the *Box* is *sweet*, very sweet, it maketh the Box sweet, but it casts not forth its smell abroad: nor is the sweetness of it so exceeding

ceeding great and overcoming, as when it is poured forth. It is said of the *Ointment*, with which *Mary* anointed our Lord, that when she brake the Box, *the savour of it filled the room.* Joh. 12. 3.

Nor is it said, thy name is as an Ointment *dropped out*: but as an Ointment *poured forth* as *Ointment* תורק emptied, or exhausted, ἐκκενωθὲν (saith the Septuagint version.) Take the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is *one with the Father, God over all blessed for ever*; so he is the Fountain and Original of Grace, full of *good Ointments*: But now look upon him as our *Mediator*, in which notion, the names of *Jesus, Christ, Messias, Emanuel*, &c. belong unto him, so he is as *Oil poured forth.* The grace of the *hypostatical union is poured out upon him*, he is *God with us. The fulness of the God-Head, dwelleth in him* σωματικῶς, *bodily.* The Revelation of Christ to the world, as the Saviour of the Sons of Men, is as an Ointment poured forth, which smells sweet in the Nostrils of all the world, and filleth the whole Creation with a *sweet savour.* The more special revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ unto the particular souls of the Saints, is as an Ointment poured forth. Christ apprehended, and applyed by faith unto the soul is exceeding sweet to it. *To you that believe* (saith the Apostle) *he is precious.*

It followeth, על־כן עלמות אהבוך *Therefore do the Virgins love thee.*

Amongst men, the term *Virgin*, signifies *one who hath not lain with Man*, neither as a *Wife*, nor as a *Strumpet.* By a metaphor the Servants of God in Scripture are called *Virgins*, because it is their duty, and will be their care to keep themselves unspotted from the world, from all *filthiness*, both of *Flesh and Spirit* (as the Apostle speaketh) the 144000 glorified Saints, mentioned, *Rev.* 14. 4. are called *Virgins.* The professors of the Gospel at large, are so called in the parable, *Mat.* 25. of which, though as to the matter of their own salvation, some were *wise* some *foolish*, yet all kept themselves from the *Paganish Spiritual Adultery* with *Devils*, Stocks and *Stones.* Gods People of *Israel* anciently was called a Virgin, *Jer.* 31. 4. 13. And Saint *Paul* professeth it his desire, to *present* the Saints at *Corinth* --- *as a chast Virgin unto Christ*, to which purpose he was *jealous over them with a godly jealousy*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. Rev. 14. 4. Mat. 25. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Jer. 31. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 11. 2.

The word here translated virgins cometh from the *Heb.* root עלם which signifies *to be hid and covered*, either Because the gravity of former times caused Parents to keep their *Virgins*, as it were *hidden, in their Houses, until Marriage.* Or else because the *modesty*

of

of those more innocent times, allowed not Virgins to go without their *Vails*; as it were hidden from vulgar sight. *Rebeccah*, when she Gen. 24. 65. came near unto *Isaac*, took a *Vail*, and covered herself; which usage continued a long time after, especially in publick Assemblies. *Tertullian* hath a peculiar Book *de velandis Virginibus*, concerning the vailing of Virgins, where he bitterly inveigheth against those who had broken those bars of modesty, and calleth them *capita nundinatitia, pudorem ostentatitiæ Virginitatis*, (what would he have said to the bare Necks, and open Breasts of this Age?) But I told you by *Virgins* here are meant the true Children of God, who are called *hidden ones*, Psal. 83. 3. *Psal.* 83. 3. such who (being cleansed) *have neither spot nor wrinkle, but are holy, and without blemish*; thus of old, *Origen*, and *Gregor. magnus*, and more lately *Beda* with the generality of modern Expositors, interpret it. *Mercer* by *Virgins* seems to understand the *Gentiles*, who had not heard of Christ, yet should be also induced to love him, upon the report of his Excellencies, revealed to them in the preaching of the Gospel, but the other Interpretation, is proper enough, and more generally received, to which I shall adhere. These Virgins *love Christ* אהבוך

The word translated love, is ordinarily used, and so interpreted it hath a great cognation with אבה *voluit* he hath willed, and תאב *desideravit*, he hath desired. Love is nothing else, but a *willing of good* to the object beloved, and *desire* is the eldest Daughter, and first fruit of love.

For the particles על־כן therefore, they shew the cause of the believers loving of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of the savour of his good *Ointments*. The excellencies of grace which are in him, of which it hath a spiritual sense.

This whole verse comprehends a *second* Argument, by which the Spouse inforceth her first petition, The first was drawn, *from that high esteem which her soul had of the love, and grace of Christ*. 2. This is drawn, *from that particular affection which she had for him* (common to all spiritual Virgins) which she shews was not brutish, and irrational; no, it was because he was *full of grace*; which was more precious, than the most excellent Ointments, and she had received the *savour of this grace*; for his discovery of himself to the world as a Saviour, and more specially to her soul as her Saviour, was as an *Ointment poured forth*.

You may now take the substance of these two verses, and so of the Spouses first and great petition thus:

Ob!

Oh! That it might please my dearly beloved Saviour, who is my Spiritual Bridegroom, to shew me some token of special love, and to multiply those tokens to me more specially, in and by the words of his Mouth, in Gospel Doctrines to speak unto my Soul, which doth really prefer the tokens of his love, and influences of his grace, before the most choice of all creature comforts. My beloved is full of grace and love, which is sweet like good Ointment; every discovery of himself is as sweet as Ointment poured forth, therefore doth my Soul love him; and not my Soul only, but the Souls of all those, who are not deflowered by the world, and by lusts.

The sum of the 2 verses opened.

From the words thus opened, several propositions of truth may be observed.

The mercies which the believing Soul thirsts after, are spiritual distinguishing mercies. 1 Prop.

The least of Christ [a kiss] *is exceeding precious to a gracious Soul.* 2 Prop.

Though the least influences of grace be precious to believers: yet they will not be satisfied, without the fullest dispensations of grace, and most frequent repetitions of it. 3 Prop.

Believers have special thirstings after the Word of God: The kisses of *his Mouth.* 4 Prop.

The thirst of a true believer will not be satisfied without a Spiritual, inward communion with Christ in his Ordinances. The kisses of his Mouth. 5 Prop.

A gracious Soul will be very bold and earnest with God for this spiritual communion with him. 6 Prop.

The Lord Jesus Christ hath Loves: A variety of Grace. 7 Prop.

The Loves of Christ are better [than Wine] *than all created comforts whatsoever.* 8 Prop.

The believing Souls knowledge of the Excellencies which are in Christ, is the ground of its earnest desire of fellowship, and communion with him. 9 Prop.

It is an excellent Argument for a Soul to use with God for the obtaining of favours from him, if it can truly say, that it preferreth his favour before all created goods. 10 Prop.

The Lord Jesus Christ hath good Ointments, which cast a savour. 11 Prop.

The name of Christ is as an Ointment poured forth. 12 Prop.

Virgin Souls love the Lord Jesus Christ, for those excelling graces which they discern in him. 13 Prop.

2.

Sermon I I.

Canticles 1. v. 1. 2, 3.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth; for his loves are better then Wine: Because of the savour, &c.

I Have (in my former Exercises) opened the Text, and named those propositions of Doctrine which are couched in the words, or rationally to be deduced from them. I come now to the particular handling of them, beginning with the first.

Prop. 1. *The thirst of a believing Soul is after Spiritual distinguishing mercies.*

1. Nature teacheth every one to say, *who will shew us any good?* Good is a thing that all the creation is enamoured upon. God is the fountain of all goodness; Every *good and perfect gift, cometh from above, from him who is the father of lights.* Who being not a debtor to the creature, must needs dispense it out *freely.* Hence that goodness of God which is his goodness of *Beneficence*, not only dwelling in him as a piece of his divine perfection: But flowing from him, as a stream from the fountain of his liberality, is properly called *Mercy*, whether it be good to us in respect of its suitableness to our outward and bodily wants, or to our more inward, and Spiritual necessities. Hence the *Mercies* and *favours* of God, are either Bodily [respecting our outward Man] or Spiritual [respecting our inward man.] The former (such now, as *life, health, peace and prosperity, riches, &c.*) are such as God gives to his Enemies, as well as to his Friends; *he maketh his Sun to rise upon the evil and the good: And sendeth rain on the just and unjust, Math.* 5.45. Spiritual good things again, are either *Gifts of common* or of *Special Grace. Gifts of common grace*, such as *knowledge, invention, memory utterance, &c.* These are indeed *Spiritual gifts*, so called by the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 12. 1. *ch.* 14. 1. because *given out by the Spirit of God*; and tending to *innoble the Spiritual part*, and they are also called the *best gifts.* 1, *Cor.* 12. 31. They are so in their kind, *better*, than those which only concern the *outward man*; but St. *Paul* himself, mentioneth better than these in the very same Text; I *shew you a more excellent way.* Neither are these *distinguishing favours*, but given in common

Mat 5. 45.

to

to wicked as well as to good men: But now there are *Spiritual* mercies κατ' ἐξοχὴν so called: Not only because they come from the *Spirit of Grace*, and *immoble the Spiritual part of man*, but because they are *suted to* the *greatest necessities* of our *inward man*. Such are the grace of *Justification, Union* to *and reconciliation with God, pardon of Sin, and the Senses of that pardon, together with all the fruits of the Spirit of regeneration*, and *Sanctification*. These are the distinguishing favours of God, which difference the Child of God from him that is not. Now I say these are those favours which the believing Soul thirsteth after, and longeth for, expressed here under the *Metaphor of kisses*.

2. And properly expressed under that notion. Men and women use not to *kiss such as they hate* but such as they have an affection for. It is a *civil usage* amongst us so to salute *strangers* indeed, but *frequency of kisses* speaks *a distinguishing love*, and some *intimacy of Affection* and are not ordinary, unless amongst very intimate Friends, such as is the *Husband* and *Wife*, *Brethren* and *Sisters &c.* But yet a little further.

3. When I say the thirstings of gracious Souls are after such distinguishing tokens of divine love. I understand it not *Exclusively*. The Children of God are made up of flesh and blood, as well as any others, and subject to the same necessities and infirmities; they have in them cravings, and lustings of the flesh. David prayeth hard for his life *Psal.* 39. *ult.* and *Abraham* for a *Child*, and *Job* for health. *Jonas* is fond of a *gourd*, and *Agur* beggeth *food convenient for him*, and although, *Rachel* may be too importunate for a Child, and *Paul* for the removal *of the Thorn in his flesh*, yet there is a lawful desire of the good things of this life allowed, yea, commanded us in that form of Prayer, which our Saviour prescribes. We are bid to pray, *Give us this day our daily bread.* But the Child of God *first* seeks *the Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, according to our Saviours prescript, Mat.* 6. 33. I remember *David* hath such an expression as this, *Psal* 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his holy Temple.* If a Child of God had but one thing to ask of God, this should be it, that it might *behold the face of God*; this is that which it would seek after, and look out for. Yea, this is that which their Souls desire *eminenter*. These are the things for which they will *wrestle with God*, and *will not let him go until he shall bless them*

with them. Other things they will beg, but these are the things their Souls will spend their strength in, and lay the stress upon: did you hear the secret pleadings of the awakened Soul with God, you would easily discern the difference between the desires it hath towards outward things, and those which are in it towards Spiritual, and distinguishing mercies, and be easily able to say: Those are the things that this Soul would have, *pardon of Sins, sense of Gods love, victory over its lusts, and corruptions*; *strength*, and *inlargement of heart in the service* of God. These are the things which this Soul would have. It asks a Ring, but the kiss is that to which it hath most mind. And all this must be understood of the gracious Soul, *when it is itself*; not in its fits of passion and infirmity: then *Elijah*, and *Job*, and *Jonah*, and any of the Children of God may speak according to the flesh, *the law of their members prevailing against the law of their mind, hath brought them into captivity to the law of Sin.* These things being premised for the explication, the truth of the proposition will be abundantly evidenced *from the example of the man according to Gods own heart* (holy *David*) and that in several Psalms, *Psal.* 4. 6. *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me.* There be many that say, who will shew us any good, but *Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me.* The light of the Sun will please others, but 'tis only *the light of thy Countenance*, that will please me, *Psal.* 63. *v.* 1. 2. *My Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee: in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power, and thy glory in the Sanctuary.* The sight of the Sanctuary will please another, but nothing will please *David*, but the sight of *Gods power, and glory in the Sanctuary.* Other-where he prays, that the Lord would *shew him his way, and unite his heart to fear his name.* That God would *come unto him, and shew himself unto him*, &c. Nor is it hard to find out the reason of it, which lies;

Psal. 63. v. 1. 2.

3. In the *sanctification* of the *renewed man*, he hath a *new heart given unto him.* A new heart signifies a *new understanding*; a *new will*, and *new affections.* New, not as to the faculties themselves, but as to the motions and operations of them, in which the soul still follows the dictates of reason, and proceedeth in the method of a rational creature.

1. The Soul is renewed in *its understanding*; from whence proceedeth a new *notion* and *judgment concerning things.* The old Serpent cheated our first Parent, when he persuaded her that the fruit of the forbidden Tree was to be desired, because *in the day she*

should

should eat thereof, her Eyes should be opened, and she should be as God, knowing good and evil; for from that day forward she was struck blind, and the Disease, (according to Divine ordination) proved hereditary: All we who are the Children of *Adam*, are born blind, neither able to take the true notion of good and evil, nor yet to make up a Judgment concerning either, discerning the things that differ: but naturally every one calleth *Evil*, *good*, and *good*, *Evil*. The Psalmist saith, that *man stood not in honour, but became like the Beast that perisheth*. In this much like the Beast indeed, that we are meerly led by the conduct of a *sensitive appetite*, not discerning those things which are truly and spiritually good: and the reason of this is our not understanding our selves, for the nature of all good lying in a conveniency, and suitableness of the object to us, a knowledge of our own state, and wants, must reasonably be supposed to a right judgment concerning good and Evil. But amongst other Evils accrewing to us by the fall, this was one, that we are by nature *Blind* as to our own State, and *Strangers to our own Souls*, not understanding that we are by Nature, *Children of Wrath, poor, miserable, blind*, and *naked*, but conceiting that we have need of nothing. Hence it is that the Soul is not able to judge of the goodness of Union and Communion with God, pardon of sin, reconciliation with God, *&c.* Nor indeed doth it come to understand it, until the *Eyes of the understanding be opened*, by the application of Spiritual Eye-salve, laid on by the *Finger of the holy Spirit of God*. Till this time, the Soul seeth no *beauty in Christ*, nothing *for which he should be desired*. The goodness of *Riches*, and *Pleasures*, and *Honours*, it knows, but as for that transcendent goodness and Excellency which is in Christ, what it is, it doth not understand; Hence it naturally desires, life, health, riches, honours, success in worldly affairs, and such common gifts, as may serve it in the world, with credit, and applause, and reputation. But for *spiritual things*, for distinguishing tokens of love, it is not able to take the *heighth*, and *length*, and *depth*, and *breadth of the love of God in them*, nor to discern their conveniency, and *suitableness* to its undone state and condition; hence (with the Cock in in the Fable) it prefers *the Barly Corn* before that *Pearl of great price*, for the purchase of which, the wise Merchant is willing to sell all that he hath. But now the regenerate soul hath its Eyes open, to discern the things that are excellent, and as it is taught by the Spirit of conviction, the truth of its natural and unregenerate Estate, so its Eyes are opened, to see that nothing but the special love of God

in

in Christ is a good suitable to it, or worthy of its caring for: and hence, the soul is taught by it's own reason, to *thirst* after these manifestations of Divine Goodness, as those which above all others, are proportioned to its wants, and highest necessities.

2. But 2dly. These desires are not the product of an *enlightned understanding* (only) but of a *renewed will* also. So wofully depraved is our corrupt nature, that the inferiour powers of our Souls, have withdrawn themselves from the command of reason; and whereas it is the method of a reasonable Soul, to imbrace or refuse a thing with the will according to the judgment, which is by the understanding given in concerning it: it often falls out otherwise by reason of our Souls disorder.

He that not only knoweth *the will of God*, but also approveth those *things which are most excellent*, yet hath no hearthimself to close with them, he is ready to teach another (like the hand of a Statue in a way which directeth a Traveller, but moveth not) he teacheth not himself; hence the renovation of the *understanding* (although the great wheel of the Soul) is not sufficient to make the Soul to will those things which are spiritually good. Mans Soul is like a Clock broken in pieces, every of whose Wheels must be mended before it will again move truly. But the gracious man is renewed, as well in *Spirit* as in *Body*, and in *Mind*. The day of the Lords Power is come upon him, and of *unwilling*, he is made willing. God hath given him to *will*, *Phil.* 2. 13. taking away that natural enmity and stubbornes, which was in his heart, and disposing, and enabling him to will those things, which are in themselves most desirable, and which are most pleasing unto God. Now there is nothing more pleasing unto our Heavenly Father, than to see his Children, more fond of their Fathers love, than of any thing else which is in his hand to bestow upon them: And this is the true reason of the gracious Souls thirst after spiritual things.

2. To which may be added (secondly) the Souls assurance, *That other things shall be added to it*, *Mat.* 6. 33. *If* (saith the Apostle) *he hath given us his Son, shall be not with him give us all things?* All inferiour good things are but appendices to these great spiritual blessings with which the Soul is blessed in Christ Jesus, the Woman that hath her Husbands heart, easily commandeth his purse. The Child of the bosom needs not trouble itself for a new Coat; It is a spiritual subtilty of a gracious heart, to be most desirous of spiritual things; other things will come alone, they are but appurtenances

ees to this great possession, and an easy faith will assure the Soul, that if Men *who are evil, know how to give good things to their Children*, who are once possessed of their Affections, *God will not be wanting to his People*, especially considering, that his liberality extends to the grass of the Field, and to the Birds of the Air, because they are his Creatures.

Let this notion (in the first place,) shew you *the vast difference* betwixt the *renewed Soul*, and that which is yet in its *natural estate*. Grace (considering our weak estate) is not so easily discernable in us, from our *Actions*, as from our *Affections*. The bent of the heart doth best discover the state of it, whether it be renewed or no. All Men and Women in the Christian world come under one of these three ranks. They are either, 1. *Profane, and dissolute Persons*. Or 2. *Hypocrites, or seeming professors, who have a form of Godliness, but deny the power thereof*. Or 3. Such as are *Disciples indeed*; the true Children of God. God is the fountain of all mercy, and goodness, and nature itself teacheth man something of this. Hence every ones Soul is looking out towards God for some good, or other. 1. The worldling, and profane Person says, *who will shew us any good?* But what is the good which he thirsts after? an increase of *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oil*: The objects for the lusts of the Flesh, the lust of the Eye, and the Pride of life, let the Swines belly be filled with these husks, and he is satisfied, let who will take *Grace*, and *Heaven*, and heavenly things; as he understands not his need of them, nor the excellency that is in them, so neither is his Soul carried out in any desires after them. 2. The *Hypocrites* design is of another nature, he would fain appear to be something (though indeed, all his glorying be but a vain shew, and a meer appearance) when indeed he is nothing. Now that which he desires is something proportioned *to this* end, he possibly *covets the best gifts*, like *Simon Magus*, who when he saw, *That through the laying on of the Apostles hands, the Holy Ghost was given*, said, *Give me this power also, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost*, Acts 8. 18. The Hypocrite may desire a *gift of Prayer*, a *gift of Prophecy*, and such like common gifts of the Holy Ghost, which may serve his design in appearing Godly, and Religious, and this satisfieth him. 3. But *the gracious Soul is satisfied with none of these*. All his desire is after the gifts of special grace, the obtaining of union with, and reconciliation to God, the light of Gods countenance, &c. and nothing less than this will satisfy his thirst. It is reported of *Luther* (in-

Use 1.

(indeed he reports it of himself) that when he first Preached the Gospel in *Germany*, he was much courted by some great Persons, and presented with many gifts, which made the good man jealous, that God intended to put him off with these things, but (saith he) *Protestatus sum*, &c, I made a protestation to my God that I would not be so satisfied. The Sons of *Keturah* may be put off with portions, but *Isaac* must have the inheritance: The gracious Soul, is a true *Artabazus*; he thinks his Saviours kiss is better than a Cup of Gold: and indeed I know no better evidence of a gracious heart than this, to be found unsatisfied, without the special, and distinguishing love of God, yet that you may not deceive your selves, I must tell you, that as it is possible, that one who is a stranger to God, may desire these distinguishing favours from God: So the desire of those good things which are but the issues of common providence, is often found in gracious Souls, and that in too high a degree. But as the former proceedeth from some inconstant principle, and lasteth not long in the unregenerate Soul, nor is much in earnest, while it continues, but like *Augustines* desire to be rid of his lusts, while in the mean time (as he confesseth) he secretly desired, that God would not hear his prayer: so the latter desires in the Child of God, are secondary, and subordinate, or (if irregular and immoderate) no more than fits of passion, out of which grace soon recovers him.

Use 2. Secondly. *Let me beseech you all to make these spiritual distinguishing mercies of God the object of your desires.* I hope there's none who hears me this day, but is sometimes breathing out the desires of his Soul unto God in Prayer. Oh! let this be the language of your Prayers: *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth*: Let others beg of God Riches, and Honours, and the favours of Men: Let others beg the golden Ring, but do you desire the kiss. Consider,

2. *The Soul of the rational Creature stands obliged by the law of reason to desire the best things*: Is there any thing to be compared with special grace? this is that more excellent way which the Apostle propounds to be coveted before the *best gifts*. You read in the book of *Esther*, ch. 5. v. 9. 11. concerning *Haman*, that he called for his Wife, and tells her of the great honour to which the King had advanced him, and of his great Riches, but (saith he) *all this availeth me nothing, while I see* Mordecay *sitting in the Kings Gate*. When the poor worldling sits down, and thinks how God hath blessed him with Riches, Honours, and whatsoever contentments the creature can afford him, hath he not cause to say, *All this availeth me nothing*,

nothing, whilſt I have no aſſurance of the love of God, whilſt (for ought I know or have reaſon to believe) the wrath of God may be flaming againſt me, and I one of thoſe who ſhall after all theſe ſweet enjoyments, ſpend an Eternity in that fire which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. *Riches profit not in the day of Wrath,* no nor any thing elſe will profit in that day, but an intereſt in Chriſt. How much better is a dinner of Herbs with the love of God, than great Treaſures with his hatred? A morſel of bread with an intereſt in Chriſt, than a ſtuffed Ox with the wrath of God?

Secondly, *Theſe influences alone will evidence diſtinguiſhing love.* 2.
Indeed other gifts may poſſibly ſpeak no love at all. The Iſraelites deſired a King, God granted them their deſires, and ſaith by his Prophet that *he gave them a King in his Wrath.* It may be truly ſaid, concerning the gifts of God to many a poor Creature, he gives them Riches in his Wrath, Honours in Wrath, outward proſperity in Wrath, outward good things dipt in divine vengeance, the wrath of God may ſmoke againſt them while the quails are betwixt their teeth. *Pœnalis nutritur impunitas.* This is a ſecret of Divine Juſtice, which every one ſeeth not. It is the ſaying of a devout Author, that God often uſeth *impios melle ſuo punire,* to puniſh wicked men with their own Hony. But God never gives a kiſs in Wrath, he cannot give *oſculum Iſcarioticum,* where he kiſſeth, he loveth. God throws the good things of this life amongſt his Enemies, his Friends living in the ſame world, it may be get ſomething of them, but they are no diſtinguiſhing mercies. But whomſoever he kiſſeth, that Soul is certainly beloved of him.

Thirdly, *There are no petitions pleaſe God ſo well, as thoſe which are put up for ſpiritual things.* When *Solomon* begged of God *a wiſe and underſtanding heart,* it is ſaid that *the ſaying pleaſed the Lord well.* Yea God ſhewed that it pleaſed him well, for he received in abundance what he asked not. Nor is this hard to be conceived by us, who have the ſame affections towards our own Children, had any one of us who are Fathers, 2 Children, and we ſhould put it to their choice, what they would ask of us, and the one ſhould ask that we would ſettle ſo much land upon him, the other ſhould tell us, he deſired not our lands, but ſhould importunately beg that his Father would love him beſt, would not the latter pleaſe you beſt? ſhould we not be ready to give that Child more than it asked? You read of the two Daughters of *Naomi, Orpah,* and *Ruth, Ruth* 1. 14, 15. they both followed their Mother in law while ſhe was full, but when ſhe was 3.

empty, *Orpah kisseth her Mother in law, and leaveth her, Naomi* would have had *Ruth* have done so too; but *v.* 16. *Ruth* refuseth, and tells her: *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy People shall be my People, and thy God shall be my God, where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.* Which is as much as if she had told her, that she valued the company of her Mother above all other concerns. Did not this think you indear her to *Naomi*? and certainly nothing can more endear a soul to God, than for it to judge his favour better than life, and his *loves more than Wine.*

Now to engage your hearts to prefer the kisses of God before any other good things, with which the hand of his providence can make you happy, there needs no more, than that you should be truly possessed with the notion of your own wants, and rightly understand the differences of good. He that knows how much more excellent than the Body, the Soul of man is: will quickly understand that those things which are proportioned to its wants, are more desirable goods than those which are only suted to our more outward concerns. Study but the excellency of the love of God, and the vanity, and Earthlinesse of the Creature, the state of your souls by nature, and with respect to that guilt, which by multitudes of Sins you have contracted, from which nothing can excuse you but the blood of Christ, nor any thing evidence your absolution (to quiet your accusing, and condemning consciences, but the *kisses of his Mouth*, and you will need no more to evince to you, that these coelestial kisses, are of all good things the most excellent, the most desirable, which being well understood, the rational Soul directly moveth to a choice and desire of them above, and before all other things.

Ser-

Sermon III.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

IT is the Spouse that speaketh; she saith not, Let him embrace me, nor (as elsewhere) *He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts*, but, *Let him kiss me.---Quid tam minimum & submissum, quam osculetur me* (is *De---Ponte* his note upon the Text.) A kiss is the least token of *conjugal love and affection.* Hence observe,

The least tokens of Christs special, distinguishing love are very desirable to believing Souls. Prop.

The free Love of God shining out through Christ upon souls predestinated unto glory, in the pardoning of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, the renewing of their natures, in *strengthening, quickening, comforting influences of grace*, is what we call the *distinguishing Love* of Christ, being not the effects of his *Philanthropy*, but his εὐδοκία; now the tokens of this are *more* or *less*, or may be so called;

According to the degree of their Emanation from Christ and the Spirit of Christ; Or, 1.

According to our judgment and apprehension, or Estimation. 2.

1. *According to the degree of their Emanation.* God, whose heart is at all times the same towards his people, yet is pleased gradually to discover it, and to manifest himself unto his people. As the Sun in the Firmament (whose Light in it self is always the same, and which hath always the same ability and aptitude to illuminate the Air, and to refresh the Earth with its Beams, yet) gives out its Light variously according to its position in the Firmament, or aspect upon the Hemisphere, its nearness to, or distance from the Object to be inlightened, or refreshed, or as it is more or less hindered by the interposition of Clouds or Vapours; so doth the Sun of Righteousness also diffuse his Beams variously. Or, as indeed a prudent Father, though at all times his heart be full of love to his Children, yet in the discoveries and manifestations of it, he governeth himself by his own prudence relating to the Child's good, and with respect to the Child's behaviour and demeanour towards him: So though whom God

loveth, he loveth with a great love, and to the end; yet as to the discoveries and manifestations of it, he governs himself by his own Infinite Wisdom, and with a great respect to his Peoples carriage and demeanour towards him. Hence it is, that though every Child of God, be beloved of God with the same *special* and *distinguishing Love*; yet every one lives not under the same *manifestations* and *emanations* of it: He sheweth to some more, to some less, to some scarcely any, according to the Wisdom of his Counsel, and the good pleasure of his own will. One soul shall have just light enough to discern that the day is broke in his soul, that the Sun is arisen with healing in his wings upon him; another shall hardly have so much light, as to discern that, but shall walk in the dark, and see no light. Another shall have the Sun of Righteousness more fully shining upon him, and be able to say with *Job*, *I know my Redeemer lives, and that I shall see him with these Eyes; and though Worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God*: Or with *Paul*, Rom. 8. 38. *I know, and am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing shall separate me from the Love of God in Jesus Christ.* Yea the same soul shall sometimes see its Beloved *standing* as it were *behind the wall*, and *looking in upon it* through the *Lattice*; see him in a Glass darkly; another time it shall see him with a fuller sight, as in the house with it, *face to face*. One while it shall only see as by a Wicket of hope open, and possibly but imperfectly open neither; another while its vision shall be as it were of the *Heavens opened*, and *Christ sitting at the right hand of God*, making intercession for it.

2. *The more or less of special and distinguishing grace* is often measured by the *soul's apprehension*, and *particular fancy* (which judgment possibly is not always according to Truth, but yet such as we ordinarily make.) Thus we commonly judge the *comfortable reflections of Divine Love*, to be the greatest tokens of it. The sweetest indeed they are, but possibly the *strengthening Influences* of Divine Grace, by which the soul is inabled to perform its spiritual duties, and to fight the good fight both against motions to sin from within, and temptations to sin from without, may be no less manifestations of special and distinguishing grace. But take your measures how you will, the gracious soul valueth at an high rate the least manifestations of such grace as may evidence to it that it is beloved of God with a special and distinguishing love. I do not say the least of these will satisfie such a soul: That it will not, for the soul in which God hath caused by his Spirit a spiritual thirst after himself, is continually

tinually crying out, *Give, Give!* The soul will not be satisfied, until in the Resurrection *it awakes with God's likeness*; but in the mean time, the least influences of this nature, will be to it *very precious and desirable.*

The truth of this Proposition will appear to you from the petitions of several of the Servants of God in holy Writ, more eminently those which we read of concerning *David*, *Psal.* 4. 6. *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord* (saith he) *lift up the light of thy countenance upon me*; and in the following words he declares, that it should be more to him than the worldlings *Harvest* or *Vintage* greater matter of gladness, than their increase of *Corn*, *Wine*, or *Oil:* And *Psal.* 84. 9. he asks no more than that the Lord would *look upon the face of his Anointed.* What can be less than *Beholding*, and giving the soul a *good look*? The liberty that the Birds of the Air, the *Swallow* and the *Sparrow* had, to make their Nests about the *Lord's Altars*, one would think argued but a small favour; yet *David* prefers their condition before his. One would think the Office of a *Door-keeper in the Lord's House*, were but a small preferment; yet *David* valueth it above a *Mansion in the Tents of wickedness.* The several expressions which *David* maketh use of in the Psalms, to testifie his desires after God, such as *Beholding*, *Looking* upon him, *Remembring him*, &c. are all evident proofs of this. The Woman, *Luk.* 7. 38. counts it honour enough to sit at Christ's feet, to wash his feet with her tears, and then to *wipe them with the hairs of her head.* The Woman of *Canaan* is called a Dog, and contented with it, so she may but lick up the *Crumbs* under her *Master's Table.* You read of another Woman that cried out; *If I may but touch the Hem of his Garment.* The Prophet *Zechariah* foretold of a time when men should *take hold of the Skirt of a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard God is with you.* Any thing of Christ is precious to a soul that hath once tasted how good he is. *Joseph* of *Arimathea* must have his *dead body*; and the Disciples must run to the *Sepulchre* where he was laid. The People of God of old had a favour for the dust of *Zion*, and *the stones thereof.* But much more precious must the least emanations of that virtue be which is in him suited to the wants (the spiritual wants of poor souls. What can be less than a look, a smile, a word? yet we find these have been very precious to the People of God.

What can we think of less, than the hearing of a Prayer; yet *David* esteemeth this at an high rate, *Psal.* 116. 1, 2. For this he professeth

professeth his *love to God*, and his resolution to *call upon him so long as he lived*. One would think that of all other Fellowship and Communion with Christ, a Fellowship with him in his *Sufferings*, were least desirable. St. *Paul* glorieth in this, and speaks of it as a thing desirable, *Phil.* 1. 10. *ch.* 3. 11. And we read of the Apostles praising God, *that they were thought worthy to suffer for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The same Spirit that was in all these Servants of God, is yet to be found in the souls of such as have any acquaintance with, or relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed our reason will tell us, that it must be so, if we consider but these following particulars, which will give you a reasonable account of the truth of this Proposition.

1. *The least token of special, distinguishing Grace, is of an infinitely sweet and salvifick nature and evidence.* There are common gifts of the Spirit of God, which indeed may be *sweet*, and very grateful to a spiritual nature (such are the gifts of *Prayer* and *Prophecy*, &c.) but yet are not of a *saving nature, or evidence*; a man may have them and perish for ever; but it is not so with such influences of the Spirit, as are tokens of special distinguishing love; spiritual gifts are to be coveted, because of a subserviency in them to *spiritual* and *saving ends*; but they are not of a saving nature, and have nothing of a saving evidence in them; but in the least token of special distinguishing love, there is something of an *evidence for Salvation*; the least of it is of a saving nature: Faith, that is but as a *grain of Mustard seed*, is as much saving, as the strongest Faith is. The measures of our comforts much depend upon degrees of grace, but our Salvation doth not. Christ bids *Zacheus* go home, for that day *Salvation was come to his house*. Salvation cometh to the soul that hour in which the least of special love shineth upon it; the least of that brings Salvation, and consequently is exceeding sweet, and must be so, if you consider this soul, as *first seeking the Kingdom of God*, allarumed with the spiritual sense of its misery by nature, its lost and undone condition in *Adam*. This is the one thing that such a soul seeks after, in comparison with which, all other things are as *dross and dung* to it. That it may discern it self beloved of God, one of those for whom Christ died, and whose sins are washed away with his blood, for this it hath wept, and prayed, and resolved to seek after it, and resolved not to be silent.

2. *There is no evidence of special Love, but is suited to some great spiritual want of the soul.* Our souls are exposed to a great variety of wants.

wants. All the tokens of God's special Love, are suited to some or other of these wants. Our souls are *impotent and weak*, both to the performance of *spiritual duty*, and to resist our spiritual adversary; to this want now *strengthening grace* is suited. They are *dull and heavy*, and move heavily in spiritual duties; to this *quickening grace is suited*. They are *sad and troubled* for fear of God's wrath; to this *consolatory grace* is suited. There is no influence of the special Love of God, but is suited to some special want or burden of our souls, and therefore the least of them must be exceedingly desirable, for so every thing is that suiteth our necessities, and so much the more as it suiteth some more special and eminent wants. If the Sun doth but arise upon the soul, it healeth, *Mat.* 4. 2. though it shineth not out in its fullest glory, if Christ spreadeth but a wing over it, there is healing in that wing. His very shadow gives delight to the soul, *Cant.* 2. 2. the least of his fruit is pleasant to its taste. *If* (saith the woman) *I can but touch the Hem of his Garment, I shall be whole.*

Such is the purity of the Saints Love, that though they may have 3.
an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, which his Love brings; yet they love him for himself, who appears to their souls as *Totus desideria*, altogether desirable. It is his Love which their souls thirst after; now the least special token of Love sheweth that he loves it, and his heart cleaveth to it. He that valueth the Love of his friend, regardeth not the *quantum* of the Token, but the nature of it; if it be of such a nature as he doth not ordinarily give to any common friend; that is it which he eyeth. If a soul can see any thing which speaketh its Lord joyned to it, cleaving unto it, this is it which makes it valuable. A discerning soul will take little joy in *gifts of common providence*, Riches, Honours, good Relations, common gifts. It may and will desire these things while it is in the flesh, as they fill up some emptinesses in that our state, but it can by no means be satisfied with these things. As *Haman* said when he had been telling his Wife of his great preferments and honours; *All this doth me no good, so long as I see* Mordecay *sitting in the King's Gate*; my Enemy is honoured and advanced as well as I: So it saith; The Lord hath given me riches, honour, *&c.* but all this doth me no good, so long as I see the haters of God enjoy as much of these things as I do; let me have some special token of 4.
God's Love. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.*

Fourthly, The Child of God knoweth, *That the least token of*

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Christs special love, is more worth than all the world. There is no proportion betwixt a *corporal* and a *spiritual good*; betwixt what is suitable to our *flesh*, and to our wants in this life, and what is *suitable to our Souls*, and necessary for us with respect to our eternal felicity. The Philosopher could say, *Animus cujusque est quisque.* The mind of a Man is the Man. The Christian knows that *Anima cujusque est quisque.* The Soul of a Man is the Man: *What shall it profit a Man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul?* The sensual Man values his life above those things that are only good, because of their subserviency to that. The rational man valueth his mind above his flesh, and accordingly sets a price upon *knowledge* and *moral Virtue*, above those things that meerly gratify his sense: The spiritual Man valueth his *Soul*, his Soul considered not only as a *rational Being*, but as a *Spirit*, *an immortal Spirit*, capable of the favour of God, and an union and fellowship with him; and ordain'd to an eternal existence, not only above his body, which he knoweth is made up of dust, moulded up into flesh, and blood, and bones, but above his mind. It really is of more value, and he is made apprehensive of it: hence he cannot but value the least that tendeth to make that happy above any thing else whatsoever. Besides, he knows himself created to an eternity, and believing that his reason teacheth him infinitely to prefer what is good for him, with reference to an happy existence to eternity above any thing that can only serve him for the short time he is to be clothed with flesh, and to live in this world: This Election of the loves of Christ before all things else, and the value he puts upon the least tokens, and manifestations of it, doth naturally and rationally follow his knowledge, convictions, and faith, and proceedeth upon the same reason, upon which any reasonable creature valueth a greater and more comprehensive good, above what is of an inferiour vertue, and more insignificant.

5. Nor is this other than according to the workings of our Souls in other cases *towards Creatures which we have made the objects of our love.* The good look, and smile of an Husband, a letter from him, a small token (be it never so small) how welcome, and acceptable is it to the Wife? The reason lies in her *love* to her Husbands Person. *To you that believe* (saith the Apostle) *he is precious.* It is impossible, indeed rationally impossible that a Soul should *believe*, (take it in what sense you will) but it must *love the Lord Jesus Christ*, Take *believing* as it signifies no more than a *firm, and steady assent to the proposition of the word* revealing Christ to us as he is the eter-

eternal Son of God, the *brightness of his Fathers glory, the express image of his Person*, full of kindness to the Sons of Men, pitying them, taking a delight in them, willing to save them, and to communicate of his fulness to them, and to this end coming from Heaven to Earth, clothing himself with our flesh, encompassing himself with creature infirmities, then dying upon the Cross, that he might purchase us unto himself, *&c.* I say it is not possible, that a Soul should firmly, and steadily assent and agree to these things, but he must *love Christ*. But if you take *believing* in the second sense, as it signifieth *the Souls receiving of him as its Lord, and Saviour*, its resting and relying upon him, and trusting him with all its Spiritual and Eternal Concerns, it is impossible but that the Soul should have a love for him above all created Objects, and having so, it cannot but naturally desire to be mutually beloved, and be passionately desirous of some evidences of it, and the least evidences of the reciprocations of love on his part, who is so exceeding dear in the Eyes of the Soul, must needs be exceedingly desirable to, and valuable by that Soul.

6. This is yet further advantaged from the consideration of *the exceeding low Opinion and Estimate which grace teacheth every soul upon whom it hath shined, to have, and make of it self.* The proud man valueth nothing but great things from his friend; nay he scarcely thinks any thing great enough for him to put any value upon. The reason lies in the high opinion which he hath of his own worth and merit; but the humble man puts a value upon the least kindness; because he hath a low and mean opinion of himself, so he looketh upon every thing as more than he could merit, or challenge. *Naaman* huffs when the Prophet sends to him to go and wash in the waters of *Jordan*, he expected the Prophet should have come out and *stroked* him, and he thought the Waters of *Abana* and *Parphar*, were as wholsome as those of *Jordan* were. The *Centurion* desireth but a *good word from Christ*, when Christ spake of coming to his House, *Mat.* 8. 8. *Lord* (saith he) *I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof.* The Woman of *Canaan* knowing her self to be a Dog, challengeth no more than *Crums*. Every gracious Soul is sensible that it deserveth nothing but *Hell* and *Wrath*, this makes the least tokens of Divine love highly valuable in its Eyes, who am I said *Elizabeth, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* who am I saith an humble Soul that the Lord should look upon me, that the Sun of righteousness should shine so much as with one healing beam upon

my Soul? Hence it valueth the least tokens of special love. It valueth nothing less than that this proceedeth from its knowledge, and spiritual judgment of things that differ. It valueth the least of this. This proceedeth partly from its knowledge, partly from that humility, with which it is clothed, as with a Garment.

7. Lastly, *This Soul knoweth that Christs Love will not terminate, and be bounded with little things.* The least tokens of distinguishing Love, are but the *Earnests* of a greater bargain, they are but the first-fruits to a larger Harvest. *Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the Courts of our God,* Psal. 92. 13. God at first gives the soul but a *good hope,* a glimpse of his glory, but it shall go on from *faith to faith,* and *strength to strength.*

Use 1. Are the least tokens of Christs distinguishing Love so valuable, so desirable? *what should then* his *fullest and largest tokens be,* the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, which Eye hath not seen, Ear hath not heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of man to conceive? The *Assurance of his Love:* The *Manifestations of himself to his Saints in glory?* If it be so sweet so desirable, to see him *in a glass darkly,* what will it be to see him *face to face.* If his *kisses* be so desirable, what will his *imbraces* be? If the *Hem* of *his Garment* be so full of vertue, and a *touch* of that so desirable what is his *long white Robe* which is the white linnen of his Saints? If a good *word,* a *good look* be so good, what will it be to be set *as a seal upon his Heart, and upon his arm.* Surely that love will be as *strong as death, as the coales of that fire which send forth a vehement flame.* Let this notion of truth, and the experience which any of your souls have had of the truth of it, kindle in you further flames of desire after the further *enjoyments of Christ in this life.* Imperfect tasts of desirable things use to do so in other things. *Quo plus sunt potæ plus sitiuntur aquæ.* Yet in all created goods there is ordinarily more in expectation, than fruition, but it is not so in Spiritual things. The Apostle prayeth for the *Ephesians, That they might be able with all Saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God,* Eph. 3. 18, 19. It is most certain that there are many holy, and gracious Souls, that want *assurance,* they may live, they may die without it, but that Soul hath nothing of grace, that doth not desire it, that doth not thirst and pant after it. 2. *What will it be to be ever with the Lord!* what an object of spiritual thirst and desire is a ful-

fulnes of communion with our Lord in his Fathers House, when we shall *know as we are known*, see *Face to Face*. How should this fill all our hearts with desires to be dissolved, that we might be with Christ, which is best of all? The least of Christ is good, but that full fruition is best. Let this discourse leave some strong pantings in your hearts; 1. *After the assurance of Gods love.* 2. *After the further manifestations of Christs strength to, and in your soul to inable you further to perfect holines in the fear of the Lord.* 3. *After the beatifical visions of God in another life.*

Learn hence the great difference there is betwixt *earthly, and spiritual objects of our desires and delights.* The worlds *Crums* are little valuable, tho some are fond of its Loaves. The good things of the world derive much of their value from the quantity of them, that it throws into our laps. The *minimum quod sic*, the least portions of the pleasures, profits, or honours of it, have little of value in them, but the least of Christ is exceeding precious; the things of the world affect not the Soul, or or its necessities, they are not certain pledges of greater measures, they will go but a little way, to fill the creatures emptinesses, but it is otherwise with *Spiritual* blessings in and *through Christ*. Use 2.

Thirdly, You may from hence observe the difference betwixt the *Hypocrites, and the Saints desires after Christ.* An Hypocrite may pretend some desires after Christ, nay he may really desire something of his love, consider Christ as a Saviour, as one that brings the Soul to life, and immortality; so he must necessarily be the object of the desire of every man that hath any view of his own mortality, and that Eternal State to which man is ordained. Even *Balaam* saith, *Oh that I might dye the death of the Righteous, that my latter end might be like his.* But mark ye, these are the fullest manifestations of Divine Love, these are more than the *kisses of his Mouth*, but for those tokens of love, which are below these, for such manifestations of the love of Christ, as tend to the inabling of the Soul to serve and glorify God, by the subduing of Mans will to the will of God, the mortification of lusts, and corrupt affections, these are not at all valuable to a sensual man, not indeed to any but to the changed and renewed Soul. I do not know any one thing from which a Man may take better measure of himself, and a good Christian may better distinguish himself from one that walketh in a vain shew, and meerly glorifieth in appearance than this: Use 3.

To a good Christian the least of Christs distinguishing love is exceed-

ing precious, and more precious than the greatest portions of the world's goods. The workings of the Spirit of Christ within, and upon the Soul, subduing the will of Man to the will of God, mortifying our Members, and the deeds of the Body: Taking the affections off the Earth, and Earthly things, and fixing them on more sublime, and spiritual objects; the giving of the Soul a good hope through grace, these are things which we usually count some of the least tokens of special, and distinguishing love. Really they are great things (nothing of Christ is little) but we judge ordinarily according to sense) we ordinarily esteem a sense or assurance, or full persuasion of the love of God, a much greater thing than these. But now for a Soul to set an high price, and value upon these, to be more satisfied, more to triumph, and rejoice in the conquest of a lust, the victory over a temptation, than in the conquest of all our Enemies: More to desire that our hearts may be filled with love to God, desires after God, delight in God, than to have our Barns filled with Corn, or our Purses with Gold and Silver, this I take to be such a difference between a Christian indeed, and a Christian in a meer Name, Title, and outward Profession, as a Christian may rest in, when he is inquiring into his Soul for evidences of the truth of grace. Other manifestations of the love of God, may be desired for our selves, and with a respect only to our selves, and the quiet relief and peace of our own Spirits; a Christian can desire these only for the glory of God. Try your selves therefore Christians by this Touchstone: An Hypocrite may desire to know that his Sins are forgiven, and that God would not impute Sin to his Soul, or that he would impute a righteousness without works; an Hypocrite may desire to live with God in glory, but these lesser tokens of love he valueth not.

Use 4. But alas! even the best of Gods People must I fear be here reproved, not for their no valuing of these *kisses of Christ* (that is incompetent with a Child of God) but for their not *enough valuing of them*, and being too passionate and unsatisfied for want of the *comforting manifestations of Divine Love.* I have before told you that these sensible manifestations of Divine Love are exceedingly desirable, and there is no Child of God, but is concerned to wish, to pray, to labour for them. But we must take heed that we be not like our little Children, whom we shall sometimes see too much slighting, and undervaluing, and ready to throw away what good things they have, because they want some particular thing, which they have a

mind

mind to, which it may be, we that are their Parents do not see so proper for them, especially under their present circumstances. It was lawful for *Rachel* to wish for, to pray for Children, but she sinned in saying to her Husband, *give me Children, or else I die. Hannah* was much in the same error, 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. weeping, not eating, and vexing her self, because she had *no Child*, and in the mean time forgetting that God had given her an Husband, who was *better to her than ten Sons.* So it is lawful, nay the duty of a good Christian to pray, to endeavour for the sweetest and fullest manifestations of Gods love. But I have often thought, that though these be good things of a Spiritual nature, and so vastly differing from the good things of this life, yet in this they agree with them, that they must be asked *with submission to the will of God*, because they are not *de necessariis ad salutem*, things that are necessary to life, and eternal Salvation, but such which a Soul may want without any breach of Gods Covenant with the Soul. 2. But for a Soul not only too passionately to desire these things, which speaketh its not submitting to the will of God in his not dispensing them to it, but to *over-look, deny, or undervalue all the tokens for good*, which it hath received from God, meerly because it hath not these, and to conclude that it hath nothing of Christs love; this is certainly what doth no become a Christian. Certainly a Christian ought as much to value himself upon those emanations of grace, by which he is inabled to serve, and honour God, as upon those by which his Soul is rendred more at ease, more refreshed and comforted. Every kiss of Christ, every measure of special distinguishing love is, and ought to be precious to a believing Soul.

Let me in the last place bottom upon this discourse a double word of exhortation, Use 5.

The first respecting the Men of the world; those I would perswade *to leave off their pursuit of their worldly and sensual satisfactions.* I would speak to them as one standing this day in wisdoms Porch, and crying after them in their hottest pursuits of the world, *Come and turn your hearts hither, you that are simple ones, and void of understanding.* I shall have a fairer opportunity to speak to these, when I come to consider the argument by which the Spouse backeth her Petition. But alas, we had need make these cries often; you can see the world, and the gay and fine things therein precious, and run after them with a swift pace, but you can see no excellency in the *kisses of Christ*, nothing for which they should be so desired, when 1.

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alas the world is but like a *brave glass*, which whole is of some value, but if broken in pieces, the small pieces of it are worth nothing. Christ, his love is like a *wedge of Gold*, or like a most *precious perfume*, the least particle, the least drop of which hath its value; there is no emanation of his special loves, but is suted to the Souls wants, and to some eminent necessity, under which the Soul laboureth. Hear *Solomon* speaking to you, *Prov.* 1. 22. *How long you simple ones will you love simplicity?* —— *And Fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Your reason tells you that a vessel of Silver, or Gold is much preferrible to one of Earth, or Glass, and as for other reasons, so for this (which you ordinarily say) break a vessel of Earth and Glass, the pieces are worth nothing, but if one of those more valuable mettals be broke, the least pieces have their value. Why should not the same reason instruct you, that Christs favour is to be prefer'd to all the world can afford you, a little of the world is not much valuable, a plentiful estate, the highest pitches of honour, a belly full of pleasure, that indeed may appear desirable; but the least tokens of Christs love, the least expressions of his favour are most valuable things. The kisses of the world are for the most part but *Oscula Iscariotica*, or *Joabitica*, like the kisses of *Judas*, who in order to the betraying of his Master first kissed him, or like the kiss of *Joab* to *Amasa*, who under pretence of *kissing him*, smote him under the fifth rib, and slew him. Christ's kisses are kisses of *peace and reconciliation*, of love, and favour.

2. Secondly. This notion calleth to all those that are true Christians, and that for three things.

1. *For a due value of the least tokens of Christs special, and distinguishing love*, look narrowly to make up your judgment, whether what you take to be such, be such or no, and there you must take heed that you do not make conclusions from *the gifts of common providence*. No man can judge of the love or hatred of God to his Soul from any thing which befalls him in this life. No man can judge of any special love from Gods giving him a longer life, greater measures of health, a more plentiful estate, or any thing of this nature. God gives the worst of men their portion in such things as these. No not only from *common gifts*, such as those of *knowledge, utterance, &c.* look therefore narrowly to make your judgment, and the surest Judgment is from such things, as more conform you to the *nature*,

or

or will of God; but if you will find *aliquid Christi*, any thing which you can call Christs, or speaks his distinguishing love, take heed of undervaluing that.

Secondly, It calls to you *for the use of all means for proficiency, and growth in Grace*: Such as hearing the Word, Prayer, the use of all the Ordinances of God, for in reason if the least tokens of Christs special love be desirable, greater manifestations of it are much more desirable. Labour for more holiness, more heavenly-mindedness, more subjection of your will to the will of God. Hath the Lord blessed you with a faith of adherence, a power given you from above to cast your Souls upon the Lord Jesus Christ? Labour for faith of evidence, be like the Travellers to *Zion* (of which *David* speaketh) *Psal.* 84. *that go from strength to strength*, until they all appear before the Lord in *Zion*. It may be a good question sometimes to satisfy a troubled doubting Soul, what is the *Minimum quod sic*, the lowest degree or measure of saving grace, but it is an ill hearing from a lazy wanton Soul.

Lastly, it calls loudly to us to *thirst after Heaven*, where the believing Soul shall be the *Lambs Wife*, and follow him whithersoever he goes, and be blessed with the cleerest vision, and the fullest imbraces of its beloved. Oh how pleasant will the mansions of glory be to those Souls, to whom the imperfect views that it hath had of Christ in this life have been so desirable, while we are *present in the Body*, even *Paul* himself owneth himself *absent from the Lord*. Now indeed we are the Sons of God, now we are in a capacity of his kisses, tokens of special love, sufficient to uphold and refresh our Souls, but there we shall be at the rivers of pleasures, where there is not only pleasure, but fulness of pleasures, and that for evermore. O Blessed are they that shall be alwaies before the Throne of God, seeing their Redeemer with those Eyes, and taking their fills of his love.

Ser-

Sermon IV.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

BY the beloveds *Kisses* mentioned in this Text, I have understood Christs *special and distinguishing love*, and *the tokens of it*, by which, either as God, blessed for ever, or as the *Mediatour* of the world, he may discover *his* kindness to the Children of Men, or the Members of his Church in common; from whence I have already observed, *that the* heart of a Believer is after distinguishing love. *Kisses* being the least of those Evidences, I have shewed, *That the least tokens of Christs special, and distinguishing love, are, and will be very sweet to Believers Souls.*

But I observe the word is in the *plural number. Kisses*, and so may signify either. 1. *Various dispensations of Grace.* Or, 2. *Various repetitions of the same Acts of Grace.* Hence the next Proposition ariseth.

Prop. *That altho the least dispensations of special and distinguishing love be exceeding sweet, and precious to Souls which have once tasted how good the Lord is, yet their hearts will be after fuller, and frequent dispensations and repetitions of it.* I take both these to be comprehended in the plurality of the term. נשק קות

Grace is a thing which is but one piece considered as it is in God, their's nothing *plural* in the one Divine Being; but as the *Sea*, which is in itself but one, yet as it washeth upon several coasts, receiveth several names and denominations, as the *English Sea*, the *Irish Sea*, and the *Baltick Sea*: So as the Grace of God respecteth the several necessities, and wants of us necessitous Creatures, it also obtaineth several names, and admits of several *distinctions*, and is shewed by several *Acts*. The *Grace of God* in the sense I am now speaking to, it signifyeth nothing but the *free love of God looking upon the Sons of Men with respect to the several necessities of their Souls.* Its *variety* ariseth from us, and our necessities, it is not divided in the *fountain*

tain only in the *stream*, and thus *Grace* admits of several distinctions, which I shall open to you in a few words, that you may rightly understand the various notions of it.

The most famous distinction of it is into *that which doth render the Soul acceptable to God*, and that which is love, *and freely given, but doth not make the Soul acceptable in Gods sight*, at least not first acceptable, or is not that for which God doth at first *accept the Soul*. The first is that which we call the *Grace of Justification*, which is the *free love of God* shining upon the Soul, imputing to it *a righteousness without works*, and *not imputing transgression* (as the Apostle expoundeth it, *Rom.* 4. 6. 8.) the *second* we call the grace of *Regeneration* and *Sanctification*, which is the love of God freely shewed to the Soul, by which its heart is renewed and changed, and filled with new habits, and dispositions, inclining and inabling it to what God requireth of it. This is *Grace*, it is from the power, and free love of God, though it be not that grace, for which God at first accepteth the Soul (as the Papists say.) 1.

This Grace of *Regeneration* and *Sanctification*, is also usually distinguished into *Habitual* and *Actual*. *Habitual Grace* is nothing else but the free love of God shining upon the Soul, *inabling it to will*, and to choose the things that are good, and pleasing to God, *he giveth to will* (saith the Apostle,) and we are made *willing in the day of his power* (saith the Psalmist) *Actual or acting Grace*, which is the love of God shewed to the Soul in inabling us to do the things that are good, for as it is he that giveth *to will*, so it is he *who giveth to do*, both *of his own good pleasure*; and our Lord told his Disciples. *John* 15. 3. *Without me you can do nothing*. 2.

There is another distinction of Grace into *Preventing* and *Subsequent*. Preventing Grace is that love of God which *preventeth*, and goeth before any good motions, or actions of ours, according to that of the Prophet, *I was found of them that sought me not, and of those that did not inquire after me.* This is usually called the *first grace*. *Subsequent grace* is that love of God which followeth this, and is variously manifested to the Souls of Gods People. In the first we are meerly *passive*, we only *receive it*: in the other we are *active*. 3.

There are other notions of grace, but I shall instance only in one more. *Special grace* is the *free love of God either concerning the being of a true Christian*, or 2dly, *Concerning its well being*. That grace which concerneth the being of a true Christian, which quickneth the Soul which before was a Child of Wrath, *dead in trespasses and* 4.

sins, is either the *Grace* of *Justification*, and what concerneth that; this is *first grace*, and *preventing grace*. Or, 2. The grace of *Regeneration*, by which a new heart is given unto us, and we are inclined, disposed, and inabled to the operations of a spiritual life. Or, Secondly, *What concerneth the better being of a Christian in the managing of all the actions, and concerns of the spiritual life*. This again is divided into *quickning grace*, *strengthening Grace*, *and consolatory Grace*.

1. *Quickning grace* may either signify that love of God, by which our Spiritual powers, habits, and inclinations are drawn out into acts. 2. *Or that whereby a Soul is made more active and lively, and free in the service of God*, which removes those difficulties, that heavinesse, and deadnesse, and dulnesse, which we often find upon our Souls as to spiritual things. For this you read *David* so often praying in *Psal.* 119.

2. *Strengthening grace*, which is the love of God shewed to the Soul in further *inabling* it both to its spiritual actions, and to the managing of the good fight against *the World*, *the Flesh and the Devil*; the Apostle calleth it a being *strengthened with might in the inward Man*; of this Saint *Paul* speaketh, *Phil.* 3. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

3. *Consolatory grace*, which signifieth *the love of God shining upon the Soul, that is sad, and heavy*, refreshing it either from the view, and sense of the truth of its gracious habits, or from the sealings of some promise, giving the Soul an assurance, or full perswasion of the love of God. *David* crieth out, *when wilt thou comfort me?* Thus you see the variety of gracious dispensations, the love of God is one as it is in him as the fountain, but it divideth itself into several streams, as it shineth upon divers Souls, or the same Soul oft-times in differing circumstances, or with respect to divers wants which our Souls have.

Secondly, As there is variety in the dispensations of grace, so *grace* discovers itself in various *acts*. Divines say that the *grace* of *Justification*, so far as it respecteth the *Souls State*, varieth not. Nor is repeated, but the acts of grace referring to our justified estate, they are repeated. God doth not pardon sin before it is committed, but repeateth his gracious act in pardoning, as the Soul repeateth its transgressions.

Now this is that which I say in this proposition, that the Spouse of Christ, the truly gracious Soul is not satisfied with any single dispensation of grace, nor with a single act, it desires not only the *first grace*, but *further grace*, not only the *grace of Justification*, but the

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grace of regeneration also, not only *gracious habits*, but that it may be *excited*, and *quickned* to *spiritual actions*, not only that it may *do them*, but that it may do them with some *strength* and *vigour*, with some life, and chearfulness, it desires renewed acts of pardon, renewed influences of spiritual strength and life. Let us but a little see it in the great instance of *David* the man according to Gods own heart, we shall find him speaking to our purpose in several *Psalms*, Psal. 19. 13. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, there he beggeth for *pardoning love*, will this satisfy this holy man? will he think it enough if God pardoneth his Sin? see what followeth in that *Psalm*; *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me*; he must have strengthening as well as pardoning grace, he desires to be freed from the *commanding*, as well as from the *condemning power of Sins*. Look into the 51 *Psalm* (a Psalm much spent in petitions for *special grace*) v. 7. He prays for *pardon*. *Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than the Snow*, he speaks in an old Testament phrase, with reference to the *Levitical* rites. Christ speaketh to *Peter*, *Joh.* 13. much in the same dialect, *Except I wash thee, thou canst have no part in me*. But the meaning is pardon me, remove the guilt of my sin from me; but is this enough for this holy Man? Is this all that he asketh of God. No, *v.* 8. *Make me to hear the voice of Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice*. There he prayeth for *Consolatory Grace*: Well, will this yet satisfie the thirst of this holy Man? No, he must also have a *renewed Heart*, a right *Spirit*. The Spirit of God resting upon him, dwelling & abiding in him: A right Heart as well as a righteous Heart, *v.* 10. *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me*. v. 11, 12. *Take not thy holy Spirit from me. Uphold me with thy free Spirit*. He must not only be set right in Gods way, but he must be kept right, and upheld in it. Look upon him in that 119 Psalm, *Psal.* 119. 28. *Strengthen me according to thy Word*. The Lord had given him the *Pardon of his Sin*, he had given him *Wisdom*, so as he tells us in that Psalm, he was become *wiser than his Teachers*. God had sanctified Affliction to him, so as by it *he had learned to keep Gods Statutes*. The Lord had given him an heart to *love his Law*, to make it his *Meditation night and day*, yet he cries, *Strengthen me O Lord*: And again, *v.* 25. *Quicken me in thy way, Quicken me after thy Loving-kindness*. v. 40 *Quicken me in thy Righteousness*. Hath he enough yet? No; one thing he yet wants, *v.* 42, *Mine Eyes*

fail for thy Word, when wilt thou comfort me? There is hardly any Dispensation of Grace which we do not find *David* in that Psalm pleading with God for. This one instance of *David* is enough to shew you the temper of every Soul, which hath but once tasted how good the Lord is. Nor indeed can it be otherwise:

1. If we consider *the Beauty and excellency which appeareth to such a Soul in every Dispensation of Grace.* The Spouse saith of Christ in another part of this Song, *He is altogether lovely.* There is no part of Christ which is not in itself lovely; he is *the brightness of his Fathers Glory, the fulness of the God Head dwells in him bodily*: As every Beam of the Sun, every Emanation of that Body of Light is lovely to him whose Eyes are open to discern it: So every Beam of the Sun of Righteousness, every Emanation of his Love must necessarily be lovely to the Soul that hath its senses exercised to discern betwixt good and evil. All Beauty is attractive; whatsoever appeareth to our Souls lovely and beautiful, appeareth also desirable. But this is not all, though Beauty and Comeliness be attractive, and allures our Souls into an earnest desire after it, yet profit is more.

2. Secondly, *There is no Dispensation of Divine Grace, but suiteth some great want of the Soul.* It is the same Reason that I gave you why the *least of Christ* is so *pretious*: Because the least of his Grace is suited to some great want of our Souls. What I there applied to the *least of his Love*, I here apply to the varieties of his gracious dispensations, and indeed reasonably; for there would be no variety in *grace*, if there were not a variety of *defects and wants, and emptinesses* in our Souls; that which distinguisheth divine grace, is our *various wants and necessities*, and we can as naturally not desire a supply for our own discerned defects and wants, as we cannot desire various emanations of divine love, suited to the supply of them. Nature prompteth us to desire a supply for every craving of our Souls. The Soul is sensible that it daily sinneth, and cannot but desire *pardoning grace*, and say unto God every day, *Forgive us our debts*; it is sensible, that it wants *purity and holiness*, and therefore cannot but desire a *right Spirit*. Its wants are many, and it therefore desireth various dispensations of grace to supply them; they are *daily renewing*, therefore it desires *repeated acts* of grace to be renewed also.

3. A third reason lyeth in the *Concatenation of grace.* The Philosopher saith, *Virtutes sunt Concatenatæ*, that all vertues are chained together, and no man is truly virtuous, but hath in him the habits of

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all Virtue, they make Virtue to lie in the reduction of the whole Soul, to the rule, guidance, and conduct of reason. I am sure *Gratiæ sunt concatenatæ*, the Graces of Gods Spirit, are like Pearl stringed together, and that upon a double account: 1. With *respect to themselves.* 2. With *respect to our sense, and apprehension. Pardoning grace* never goeth without *renewing and regenerating grace.* God never saith to any Soul, *Thy Sins are forgiven*, but he addeth, *sin no more.* The *Grace of Consolation* never goeth without the Grace of *Sanctification.* The *Grace of Regeneration* is alwaies attended with some degrees of that Grace which *strengtheneth*, and *quickneth* the Soul unto its *Spiritual work and duty.* 2. As to our *sense of it.* The Grace of God being as I have before said, nothing else but the *Love of God* freely shining upon us, with respect to our several circumstances, and diversified wants; the Soul is prone from the want of a supply as to one thing to suspect its want of all. Hence it is that it suspecteth the want of the love of God in the whole, from its sense of the want of it in part. Indeed this oft-times is the error of a Soul that is truly gracious, from its not distinguishing betwixt those things that are necessary to *Eternal life* and *Salvation*, and those influences that are meerly *accommodating*, and tending to the better being of the spiritual life, the dispensations of which are not meerly directed from the *divine love*, but from the *divine wisdom*, and sometimes are with-held from the wisdom of God, by which he directeth his own motions to their ends. Hence as *Gideon*, when the Angel came to him, and said, *The Lord is with thee, O thou mighty man of valour*, replyed. *If the Lord be with us, why am I thus?* So the Soul thirsting after the love of God, if any go about to persuade it, under its sadness, and dejections under the sense of its weakness as to spiritual duties, or dulness, and heavines in the performance of them, that yet the love of God is toward it, it hath a truth of Grace, it cries out, *If God loved me, why am I thus?* I am weak, why am I not strengthened, or my Soul is dull, and dead, and heavy, why am I not quickned? Or I am sad, and dejected, if God loved me, why am I not comforted? The Soul of a believer is apt to conceive, that because *Love* is one in God, therefore it cannot be a sharer in his love, while it wants any one aspect of it, which might suite its spiritual wants.

Another reason may be, the *possibility which the Soul apprehends of obtaining all grace.* Let a thing appear to us never so beautiful, never so useful, yet if we lye under an apprehension of its impossibili-

ty to obtain it, this moderateth its desires after it, nay extinguisheth them; for our Reason forbids our Wills to move after things which we apprehend not possible to be obtained: But such is the goodness of God towards us, that there is no dispensation of his love, but he hath somewhere or other promised and revealed to us as possible to be obtained by us. Now good apprehended possible to be obtained by us, is the proper object of the desires of our Souls, we are told, that *it hath pleased the father, that in Christ all fulness should dwell, And that the fulness of the God-Head dwelt in him bodily*, 1 *Col.* 19. 2 *Col.* 12. *and of his fulness* (saith the Evangelist *Joh.* 1. 16.) *We have all received grace for grace.* To pass by other interpretations of that χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος some understand, *Grace* suited to all that *Grace* which is *in Christ*. There is no habit of Grace in Christ suited to our human nature and state, but believers may receive something from him in proportion to it. There is no love of God to Christ, which fitteth us, or may fit us in our proportions, but we may receive. *Nay there is no love of God which floweth from the fulness of the Divine Nature*, of which we are capable, but *the believer may receive*. For saith the Apostle, *the Fulness of the God-Head dwelt in him* σωματικῶς *bodily*. In him as our mediator, that he might communicate to those that are the members of his body, and that I take to be the propereſt sense of those words, *Of his fulness, that is, of the fulness of the God-Head*, which dwelt in him as Mediator, and dwelt in him, so as that he could communicate it to those that believed in him. Hence he tells us, that *all power was given unto him both in Heaven and Earth, and that the Son of Man had power upon Earth to forgive Sins*, and that *God had given unto him Eternal life, that he might give it to whomsoever he pleased, so as the Soul apprehends all grace*, not only *beautiful* and *lovely*, but also as *possible* to be obtained by it from Christ, and having such apprehensions of it conjoined with its before-mentioned apprehensions of the beauty and excellency of it, and the usefulness of it, with respect to the various and renewing wants of the Soul, it must necessarily desire it.

Use 1. This notion may (as the other which I have handled) shew you the difference betwixt *the desires of the Hypocrite, and those of the true child of God after Grace*. There may be some desires after Grace in Souls, in whom there is no true and real change of heart, but they are either terminated, 1. *In the common gifts and graces of the Spirit*. Or 2. in the *Comfortable manifestations of it*. 3. Or (at furtheſt) *in some particular dispensations of it*.

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The *common gifts and graces of the Spirit of God*, may be desired by those in whom the love of God doth not dwell. By *common gifts*, I mean *knowledge, utterance, an ability to pray, to discourse of the things of God*, &c. And the reason is, because these may serve a double end, which an Hypocrite may have. 1. *His honour, and credit, and reputation in the world.* Common gifts and graces may give Men and Women a great name in the Church of God, though they will give a Man no place in the Kingdom of God. They may (especially as times may go) much serve a man both as to his *lust of gain* and *covetousness*, and also as to his lust of *Ambition*, and seeking after the honour which is from men, and serve him to appear as some body in the world, and to make him pass for a great Professor, and help him to preferments also in the Church, and so serve his Belly. You have an eminent instance of this in *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 9. of whom it is said, *That he used Sorcery, and bewitched the People of* Samaria, *giving out himself to be some great one.* v. 13. *He beheld the signs, and miracles that were done*; this Man, now (to augment his reputation, and probably that he might be in a capacity to get more mony than he had been able to get by his tricks of *Hocus Pocus*, and diabolical Arts) seeing the Apostles conveying the Holy Ghost to their Disciples, by their laying on of hands, he did not only desire the graces of the Spirit thus far, but *offered them mony, for that power, that upon whomsoever he laid his hands, they also might receive the Holy Ghost.* There is no doubt but whatsoever may promove the lusts of an Hypocrites heart, may be the object of his desire. Now as a *Notional knowledge* of the things of God, or the *common practical gifts and graces of the Spirit*, may serve a man as to his profit and advantage, or as to his honour and reputation, so they mightily gratify the lusts of an Hypocrites heart, who doth all to be *seen of Men*, and whose utmost design is but to *glory in appearance*, and in the *praise of Men.* Besides this, they may also serve him very far in the quieting of his *natural conscience.* Natural light discovering to us that there is a God doth also shew us that there is some homage due to him, and hence ariseth a natural obligation upon men to be doing something in discharge of this homage, to which these common gifts are subservient. The like might be said of *moral habits*, (which are but *common grace*) men that are [illegible] touched with the love of God, or desire to please him, may yet see a beauty, and a profit too, in a moral, just and righteous conversation, and desire so much grace as may keep him from the scandal, and reproach 1.

proach of the world, and from the ruining of himself, and Family or Relations.

2. Nay Secondly, his desires may extend to the *consolatory manifestations of the love of God*, the pardon *of his sins*, *and the sense of that pardon*; what should hinder? In a time when a *Prince* is free of his pardons, it is not impossible that some of his Subjects may take out their pardons that it may be, have no great sense or apprehension that they stand in need of them. Hypocrites that live within the compass of the Church of God, are often hearing of *sin*, and the *wrath of God* due to sin, to *Original sin*, to *Actual Sins*, to Sins of *Omission* and *Negligence* as well as those of *Commission*, and *Presumption*; they also hear daily proclamations of Gods grace, and readiness to forgive, what should hinder but that they *ex abundanti cautela*, tho they be not touched with any great sense of sin, tho they have some good opinion of their own Righteousness may yet earnestly desire to know their iniquities are forgiven, and that the Righteousness of Christ might be imputed to them also, that they may know, that they also shall another day stand righteous before God.

3. Nor do I see any reason why they may not go one step further, and *passionatly desire some strengthning and assisting grace*, *against some particular lusts*. Some extravagant desires or lusts of the heart of man do not only expose him to the wrath of God in another world, but to the wrath of God manifested in this life. Such now as the *lusts of the flesh*, *drunkenness* &c. Experience tells us that the pursuit of these ruines mens healths, estates, reputations; whatsoever is desirable to us in this life and concerning such extravagant motions of our affections and passions, as have these issues which are contrary to the natural desires of *life* and *health*, and *prosperity* in the world; I cannot tell any reason but that an hypocrite may sincerly, desire of God strength against them. But now in this stands the child of God distinguished from all hypocrites; In his desire after all grace, not this or that *kiss* but every kiss of Christs mouth, every manifestation of the love of God to a soul, particularly such manifestations of Gods love, as serve not at all to gratify any desires of the flesh whether respecting gain and profit, or honour and reputation in the world, but such as serve to make the soul more holy, and spiritual, more like to God, more compliant with the will of God in all things; the hypocrite desires influences of grace, not that he might glorify God but meerly that he might serve a turn.

Use 2. Secondly, This discourse will let us see *The great difference betwixt* the

the desires that are found in the child of God after *Grace*; and *those desires which may be found in him after the things of the world.* The best of Gods people are compositions of *soul* and *body*, as they have a spiritual part which hath its desires and cravings, so they have the cravings of the flesh also; their outward necessities justify in them some desires of the things of this life, but now these desires are limited, *If God will be with me saith Jacob, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God*, Gen. 28. 20, 21. *Two things (saith Agur Prov.* 30.7.) *have I required of thee, deny me not them before I die. Remove far from me vanity, and lyes, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me.* The child of God is so far from desiring abundance of the world, that he often prayeth against it. He would not be full lest (as *Agur* expresseth himself *v.* 9.) *he should deny God and say who is the Lord?* he would not be wholly empty, *lest being poor he should steal and take the name of God in vain.* As to grace he is like the *horseleaches daughters* still crying, *give, give.* But for the world if he hath food convenient for him, he saith to all the world as *Esau* once to *Jacob. I have enough my Brother, I have enough, keep that thou hast unto thy self.* No child of God covets all the world. His conversation is as to it without *covetousness*, if he hath but Bread to eat, and Rayment to put on, if he can but make a competent provision for his family, and have but something to give to them that want, he blesseth God he hath enough; but as to *grace*, he may be added as a fifth thing to those four which *Solomon* Speaks of which never say they have enough. Nor indeed do I know two worser evidences against any soul, than never to think it hath enough of the world, and yet to be satisfyed with any measures of grace. I must confess I have been often troubled to see those whom I should otherwise have judged excellent Christians so fond of the enjoyments of this world, and so unsatisfyed when the providence of God hath crossed them in those desires and expectations. I wish I could see equal pantings in the souls of some who yet would be thought great professors, after Christs kisses, as I often see in them after the kisses of the world. But alas that is impossible that nail would drive out the other, Sirs, that is a dreadful text which you have, 1. *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things of the world: If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* The world is a thing that may be touched with a Saints hands,

and moderately used for his necessities, but it must not be loved, it must have no place in the Child of Gods Heart. What shall we say then to such Professors, as are much more fond of sensual satisfactions to gratify their sensitive appetite, than they are of the Grace of God to *mortify that appetite*, to sublimate their affections, subjugate their passions, to learn them in all Estates to be content to submit their wills unto the will of God: How dwelleth the love of Christ in such Souls as are more fond of the worlds kisses than of his?

Use 3d. But I shall shut up this discourse with a word of *Exhortation*, persuading you to speak after the Spouse in my Text, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth.* Cease not till you have brought up your hearts to this frame, that they cannot be satisfied without something of Christs fulness, without some tasts of all the *riches of Grace*; whatsoever I have given you as the reasons of this truth, may be used by you as arguments in the case. There's no kiss of Christ, no Beam of Grace, but hath its lightsomness, and glory in it. No dispensation of Grace but is suited to some eminent want of the Soul, if you discern it not, the fault is in your Eyes, you do not understand the cases of your own Souls so well as you ought to do, it would be no Grace, no Love, if it were not proportioned to some want in us. It will be an hard thing for you to satisfy your Souls in the having any truth of Grace, if you find not your Souls thirsting after every manifestation of it. There is no influence of Grace, but is possible to be obtained. There is a fulness of the God-Head in Christ considered as your Mediator, and he is therefore full, that we might drink abundantly of his fulness, but to all these before enlarged upon, I shall add two.

1. *It is an evidence of true Grace to be thirsty after all Grace.* That Soul loveth not Christ truly that doth not desire that he should love it fully. True love is satisfied with nothing less than *all of the Beloved*, and renders the Soul jealous presently, if it wants but one good look bestowed upon another.

2. Secondly, *The more thou hast of Grace, the more thou wilt doubtless have of Glory.* I know some question whether there shall be any degrees of glory, for my own part I see little reason to question it; doubtless those that lie most in Christs Bosom here, shall sit nearest him upon his Throne hereafter. I shall shut up my discourse with four or five directions in this case.

1. First, *Labour to understand the various emanations of special, and distinguishing Grace*, how many ways the Sun of Righteousness may shine

shine upon Souls with healing in his Wings. I am afraid many talk of Grace, special distinguishing Grace, who do not understand it as they ought to do. Study to understand Christs saving looks upon Souls, and to distinguish them from other looks, which have no such saving vertue, and evidence in them. Christs saving looks upon Souls, are either such as *evidence pardon of Sin*, or *contribute to the change of the heart in first or further degrees of holiness*: Or *comforting us with the view of our own sincerity*, take a right notion of Christs kisses.

2. *Be sure in thy desires of further Grace thou forgettest not to be thankful for what thou hast*, the least token of love for good to thy Soul is more worth than the world, there's nothing little in Grace. I before observed to you the passions of some Christians, who are ready to overlook all that God hath done for their Souls, if they want some particular dispensation of Grace, which their hearts are set upon.

3. *Make use of what thou hast. To him that hath shall be given.* It is a saying which our Saviour applyeth to the parable of the sower, *Mat.* 13. 12. *Luk.* 8. 18. and to the parable of the *Talents*, *Mat.* 25. 29. In the two first places the meaning may be: *To him that hath in actual possession*, so it may be conceived as a promise of further grace to those who have any thing of the truth of grace, but in the 25. *Mat.* 29. it is plainly to be understood of such as make use of, and improve what they have, for it is spoken with reference to those Servants that had *ten Talents*, and had gained other *ten*, and *five talents*, and had gained other five.

4. In thy desires of more Grace distinguish betwixt *necessary and comfortable influences* betwixt manifestations of the Spirit given thee to *profit withal*, and such as are given thee to *make thy life more easy, and cheerful*, the first thou mayest beg more absolutely, and be as earnest for them as thou wilt. The latter must be asked with more explicite submission to the will of God, they being such as are not only not necessary to thy glorifying of God, under all circumstances, but not necessary to the eternal Salvation of thy Soul, & such for which the wisdom of God may see more reason under some circumstances to with-hold from thee, and that in order to thy edification and improvement in holiness. As to such influences, though thou oughtest to desire them, and to pray for them, yet thou oughtest also to be content to wait for them. *David* did so: *His Eyes failed*, while he said; *When wilt thou comfort me?*

5. *Wait upon God in all his own institutions.* The Ordinances of God are usually called *means of Grace*, because they are usually made

use of by God, as means in, and by which he communicateth his Grace in the several influences of it to our Souls. These Ordinances are the *Word*, *Sacrament*, and *Prayer*. The first Grace is usually dispensed to us upon reading, or hearing the Word of God, and so is *further Grace* also. Therefore the *Apostle Peter* commands us to *desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. I had* (saith *David*) *perished in my affliction, if thy Word had not been my delight. The Law of the* Lord (saith *David*) *is perfect, converting the Soul, the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the heart, the Commandment of the Lord is pure inlightning the Eyes*, *Psal.* 19. 6. 7. Christs love is a thing different from the Word, but it is shewen to the Soul in the use of the Word. Infinite instances might be given you of *Christs* kissing Souls, (manifesting his special love to Souls, is it which I mean by it) in the reading, and especially in the hearing of the Word; there it is, that is, in the use of that, that he usually speaks to the hearts of Men and Women, hence the Apostle tells us, *that the holy Scriptures are able to make the Man of God wise to Salvation, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness*: Yea, *and for patience and comfort too*, *Rom.* 15. 4. *For whatsoever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* The *Sacrament* that is another mean, the Sacramental believing, eating of the Bread and Wine, is an *eating of the flesh*, and a *drinking of the Blood of Christ*, a feeding upon all Christs fulness as Mediator. *Prayer* is a mean of all Grace, whatsoever God hath promised in a way of Grace, is all promised upon this condition, *That he will for it be inquired of by his People.*

5. *Walk humbly and uprightly before God.* The humble he will teach, (saith the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 25.) and to the humble he will give more Grace, *Ja.* 4. 6. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. he dwelleth with those *that are of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirits of the humble, and the hearts of those that are contrite*, and for the upright he hath told us, *that he will with-hold from them no good thing.* But this is enough to have also spoken to this Proposition. There is another term in the petition of the Text. which I shall take notice of, she prayeth not only that her beloved would *kiss* her, and that not with one but *many kisses*, but she adds *of his Mouth.* But of that hereafter.

Ser-

Sermon V.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth.

I Told you in the cloſe of my laſt diſcourſe that I ſhould not yet leave this Text, becauſe of the laſt words [--- *of his Mouth*;] which we muſt either be allowed as a *Pleonaſme*, and ſuperfluous, or to contain in them yet ſome further ſpiritual *Inſtruction*. The Jews ſay there is not *the leaſt tittle of the Law, upon which great things do not depend*; nor do I fancy the allowing of more *Pleonaſms* in holy writ, than muſt neceſſarily be allowed. I ſhall therefore take notice of what *Origen* and *Beza*, and divers others have before me noted from the addition of theſe words; *That the believing Soul thirſts after a communion with Chriſt in his Word.* Mr. *Ainſworth* taking ſpecial notice of the term *kiſſes*, underſtands the *Doctrine of the Goſpel*, which is the *Word of Reconciliation*, as kiſſes are *amoris & reconciliationis ſymbola*, the tokens of love, and reconciliation: I am ſure the notion is in itſelf true, whether the ſenſe of this Text or no. *The Law worketh Wrath*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) the Doctrine of the *Goſpel* alone ſpeaks *love, and peace*, Chriſts Spouſe here (ſay ſome interpreters) deſires his manifeſtation in the Fleſh, & the publication of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, together with the comfortable application of thoſe Doctrines to her conſcience. I am ſure there is a truth in that. Let me therefore a little make uſe of their notion. Take this for the Propoſition:

Prop. *It is of the nature of a believing Soul to thirſt after a communion with Chriſt in his Word, his Goſpel eſpecially, and the teachings of his Spirit in and by that.*

I here join two of thoſe propoſitions together, which I diſtinguiſhed upon the opening of the words. She deſires the *kiſſes of his Mouth*. 2. *That he ſhould kiſs her with the kiſſes of his Mouth.* This Propoſition will offer me an opportunity to diſcourſe to you, the affection

affection of the believing Soul, to the *words of Christ*, both in the more external, and more spiritual, and internal teachings and ministrations of it.

The words of the Gospel are the *words of Christ*, the *kisses of his mouth*, whether they be applied, and set home to the particular conscience yea or no. The ministration of the Gospel is in itself exceeding glorious: *Therein* (saith the Apostle,) *is the Righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. Rom.* 1. 17. Therein is Gods way of Salvation revealed to lost sinners, and by it *life* and *immortality* are *brought to light*. Now this word of God is to be considered;

1. *As written for our Instruction.* For saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 15. 4. *whatsoever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

2. *As preached.* So it is the *Ordinance of God* for our *faith*, and therefore called *The word of Faith, Sanctification, Consolation and Eternal Salvation*, for indeed the supply of all the spiritual wants and necessities of our Souls. Hence there are three ways by which our Souls have a communion with God in his Word: *Reading*, *Hearing*, and *Meditation.*

1. *Reading* is one means by which we come to the knowledg of the will of God in his Word. *The King of Israel* was commanded *to read* in *the Book of Gods Law all the days of his life, that he might learn to keep the Law of his God*, and there is a blessing pronounced *to him that readeth.* Indeed he that readeth the word as it lyeth before us in our Bibles hath this advantage, that he is sure what is there plain to his understanding, is the undoubted, pure Word of God; and while a man readeth the Scriptures he is but repeating of Gods Word to his own soul, or hearing God immediately speaking to him.

2. *Hearing the word preached is another means of communion with God in his Word.* This is an Ordinance of God, and such a one, as he honoureth with being the great means of calling, and saving such as he hath ordained to life: So as in that ordinance a soul hath an opportunity to *meet God*, to *draw nigh unto* him, to *hear him speak unto it.* We must take heed that we do not think, that all which we hear out of pulpits is spoken by God; God no further speaketh by the Minister, than the Minister keepeth unto his Text, & speaketh according to the *Scriptures*, either by way of *interpretation*, or *application.* And therefore every good Christian, is to *search the Scriptures* whether what their Preachers deliver be consonant to them. Those noble

Bereans

Bereans mentioned *Acts.* 17. did so when St. *Paul* was the Preacher, and are commended for it, The Scriptures are to be judged by no other rule, but *Sermons* are to be measured by the *holy Scriptures.* No man hath communion with God by hearing, further than so far as that is consonant to the will of God which he heareth. But admitting the Minister of Christ answereth his name and Office, and faithfully revealeth, and applieth the will of God, while we hear we have communion with God; God communicateth his holy will unto us, and we communicate with him by an obedient Ear who hath comanded us to *hear that our souls may live.*

A third way is by *Meditation.* This is an act of our *inward* man standing upon the things which we *have read* or *heard*, as necessary to the souls spiritual nourishment, as *Digestion* is to the nourishment of our bodies by what is their proper food; a duty much practised by *David Psal.* 119. 97, 99. And a good man is described by it. *Psal.* 1. 3. *He meditateth in the law of the Lord night and day.* By this, the soul doth not only fasten the word of God upon it self but it also dives deeper into the depths of it. I say this communion with God in his word is very desirable to the spouse of Christ. I added *his gospel especially.* 3.

The Word of God in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is made up of several parts.

There is in it sacred history; no unuseful part of holy Writ, it being that which more than any other acquainteth us with Gods way of of *providence* with his people of old. 1.

You have in it many Moral *Instructions*, and *Precepts of Christianity and Godliness*, an admirable part of Scripture, that which makes the holy Scriptures to be what no other book in the world is, *a light to our feet, and lanthorn to our paths.* Shewing us what we are to do, what to decline and avoid but yet these are not properly called *Gospel doctrines.* 2.

You have in it many *Propheſies*, or *predictions* of what God intended to do in the world, most of which are fulfilled; some we yet live in the expectations of. 3.

You have also in it many *terrible threats*, and *curses*, and many woes denounced against the violaters of the law of God; these are excellent portions of holy Writ, to keep your souls in awe and make us afraid of sinning against God, but these are not properly *Gospel Doctrines* but properly belong to the *Law* which declareth and worketh wrath. 4.

You have also in those sacred books, *many declarations of the* 5.

good

good will, and love of God to poor lost Sinners declared in, and through Jesus Christ. You have an historical part of the Gospel, declaring what Christ hath done, and Suffered for us, a declarative and promissory part, proclaiming Salvation to poor lost creatures, and promising life and Salvation, and all grace to some poor undone sinners, promises for the conferring, and increase of grace. These and such like, I principally understand by *Gospel Doctrines.* The Doctrine of Gods free grace in the pardoning of sin, and the *imputation of Christs Righteousness* to the soul. Doctrines that reveal Christ and tend to bring the soul to Christ, or direct the soul in walking with him. Now I say tho the believing soul values every line of holy Writ, and hath a reverence for the whole Word of God, and desires a communion with God in reading, and hearing and meditating in every part of his revealed will, yet it hath a special thirst after those portions of it which contain these Revelations: Other parts are sweet but these are sweeter than the *Hony* and the *Hony-comb.* No portions of Scripture are like these to the believer. Every verse in the book of God is a Star but as Stars differ one from another in glory, so do the Revelations of the will of God in our apprehensions as more suited to our necessities. For the proof of the proposition: There is so much reason for it, that were it not that it is fit your *Faith* (for the help of which the Ministry is ordained) should not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God, I might forbear the use of any Scripture texts in the case. The World was many hundred years old before there was any written Word of God, (of which we have any record.) The first that we read of was *the Book of the Law* which the *King of Israel* was commanded to have alwayes before him and to *read therein all the daies of his life. Saul* was the first *King of Israel*; he was a wicked man and regarded not the *divine Law.* The next was *David* (the man according to Gods own heart.) See his Affection to the word Superlatively expresst *Psal* 19. 7, 8, 9, 10. 11. *The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul, the Testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple, the Statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart, the Commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the Eyes. The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than the hony and the Hony-comb.* Psal. 119. 14, 15, 16. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches, I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways, I will delight my self in thy statutes,* v. 97. *Oh! how I love thy law, it is my medi-*

meditation night and day. Read over that excellent *Psalm* at your leisure, you will find in it a strange variety of expressions setting out *David's* value of, and thirst after the *Word of the Lord. I had* (saith he in one passage) *perished in my affliction, if thy Word had not been my delight.* For the Word of God as delivered by Ministers, you shall all along the History of the Scripture observe, you read not of one good *King of Judah* and *Israel*, but they were very desirous in all cases of consulting with the *Prophets of the Lord*; and no doubt but the reading the Law, and the Exposition of it in the Sanctuary, was the reason why *David, Psal.* 42. *Psal.* 63. and *Psal* 84. so passionately bewailed his being banished from it. In short, look through all the New Testament, you shall find no company of Believers but by some Expressions or other declaring their Zeal for, and fondness of the Word of God. And the same Spirit continued in gracious Souls after the times that the Scripture makes mention of. I remember *Hierom* tells us of a good woman, whom he saith he could never find without a *Bible in her hand*; and Mr. *Fox* in his *Martyrology* tells us a story of Three Maids (in *Lincolnshire*, if I remember right) who sold their Estates in a time of Persecution to buy a few Leaves of the Bible. It were infinite to tell you the Instances we have in *Ecclesiastical History*, of the great thirst after, and delight in the Word of God, which good people have expressed. What need we any further Instance than what the Experience of our own Age doth afford? How naturally do Souls born again, *as new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word of God?* It is true some Hypocrites (especially in times when Religion is in credit and reputation) may lay hold of the Skirts of a Jew, and say, We will go with you: I mean, may shew some fondness of hearing and reading the Word; but no Child of God, no regenerate man, but is indeed thirsty of it. So that as it was said of *Paul*, as soon as he was converted, *Behold he prayeth*; so it may be said of every man and woman, let them before have been never so loose, and vain, and careless as to reading and hearing the Word; *Behold he readeth*, or *Behold he heareth.* Nor indeed is it possible it should be otherwise.

If we consider first *That this is the Will of God concerning every Soul.* The Soul is unchanged till it be in some degree *willing and obedient.* So as what St. *Paul* spake more openly, he saith to God though more privately, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* Now this is one of the first things that God calleth such a Soul to do. *Hear,* (saith God) *and your Souls shall live.* As God said to *Paul, Go into* 1.

the City, and it shall be told thee what thou shouldst do. So God saith unto the changed Soul, *Go to Church, and hear my Word*, and go and read in my Word, and there it shall be told thee what thou shouldst do. *Augustin* tells us a story, that being in a great Agony of Spirit, and not knowing what to do, he heard a voice as out of an inward Room, saying, *Tolle & lege*, Take up and read. The Soul in this doth but conform himself to an impression that is made by the Spirit upon his heart, and is coævous to the hour of his New Birth; and this you shall see exemplified not in this or that particular Soul, but in every Soul born of God. The Infant is not more naturally disposed to suck the breasts of the Mother or Nurse, than such a Soul is disposed to read, and hear the Word of God from the impression of the holy Spirit of God upon it in the first hour of its Conversion.

Nor is any thing more reasonable than such an impression, if we consider *God's Ordination of his Word* as the *pabulum animæ*, the food and nourishment of the new born Soul. 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *As new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* And for this very reason this thirst after, and delight in the Word of God, never goeth out of a sanctified heart; for the Word is the proper nourishment of the Soul in all states; it is not only *Milk for Babes*, but Meat for *stronger ones. By these things men live*, saith *Hezekiah. The just shall live by Faith*, saith the *Prophet*. The Word is the object of this Faith. You shall observe that the God of Nature hath planted in most sensitive creatures a *knowledge of their proper food*, and an *appetite or desire to it*. The God of Grace hath given the renewed Soul a knowledge of its proper food too, and created in it an appetite to it, so as no soul is born again without a knowledge of the Word, as that by which it is to live, or an appetite to it. Nay, it is not only necessary to uphold the Spiritual Being of the the Soul, but to all the purposes of its well-being. Such a Soul findeth the Word an inexhaustible Fountain, a large Store-house, a Shop that hath a Salve for every Sore, a Medicine for every Distemper: Hence indeed it is morally impossible that a regenerate Soul should not value the *kisses of Christ's mouth*: The Breath of Christ is comforting to those that are sad; strengthening to those that are weak; quickening to those that are dull; an healing to all the Soul's Diseases: and there are infinite Records of the Cures done by it, both in Scripture, and in all Ecclesiastical Story, and in all Experience. A Christian converted, cannot meet with another, but he or she hath

some

some story to tell them of, some Cure wrought in them by the Word of God. *I had perished*, saith one, in such an affliction, if the Word had not been my delight. I had perished, saith another, under such a temptation, if such a Promise had not supported me. O the infinite Cures which the Word of God Read and Preached hath done upon a numberless number of Souls! Look almost into any Church of God. There are many Souls that were dead in trespasses and sins, and by the Word were brought to life; many Souls that were dropping into the bottomless Pit, whom the Word laid hold upon, and saved from it. Here's a broken heart, that was bound up by some lines of holy Writ. There's a tempted Soul fetcht out of the depths of Satan by a Promise in the Word. There hangs a poor fearful doubting Soul resolved by it, and brought to a settled state. The Regenerate Soul meets with these Stories in all its new company. And

Thirdly, It hath a reason to believe them, because it *hath had it self a great Experience of the Virtue of it.* The *Word* (saith such a Soul) it is that which hath saved my Soul from Hell. My Soul, my poor Soul, was in a full career to the Devil, the Word in such a Sermon, in such a Scripture met me, and turned my face Heavenward; others my companions in sin dropt into the Pit; my foot was upon the brink of perdition, it is God's mercy I was not ingulphed in Eternal Misery. God shewed me this mercy by his Word; Shall that Word be ever out of the tast of my Soul? Shall not I wait upon God in the Reading and Hearing of it as long as I live? Hath Christ conveyed his Breath, his Life into my Soul, by the kisses of his mouth, and shall he not by it convey all things that my immortal Soul stands in need of? Let others that never tasted the good Word of the Lord, to whose Souls the Lord never created the fruit of the lips, *peace, peace*, undervalue and despise the Word of the Lord, let them undervalue Scriptures, and despise Prophecyings, and count vain idle Books better to read in than the Book of God; vain, idle discourses better than lively, Soul-saving Sermons. I have tasted better things, I know otherwise. 3

Once more, *There appeareth to the renewed Soul, a beauty and excellency in the word of God surpassing all other writings of what nature soever.* You shall observe in the world two or three sorts of People. 1. Some there are, who indeed hardly deserve the name of rational Creatures, they delight in no sort of *knowledge* in nothing of any tendency to ennoble the mind of man, but only in sensual things; 4

hence they almost hate a *Book* or any thing which may have any tendency to adorn and any way ennoble the mind of man. 2. Others have some delight in knowledge, but it is an airy knowledge of things that are superfluous, and signify nothing as to the use of mans life, a knowledge of things only which please the fancy, tickle the senses, furnish the tongue with discourse for all humors and companies. *Romances* and *Play Books*, any Books of idle *discourse*, and *foolish stories* please them, but for the knowledge of such things, as should ennoble their minds, they have no fancy for it nor any Books, or discourses that have any tendency to such an end; these are a sort of titular Christians that are not yet come up to the highest forms of Heathens. 3. There is a third sort of more *noble Souls* that love *Knowledge*, and despise vain and airy *knowledge*, that issueth in no good and worthy end as to mans life; but seek such a knowledge, as may make them *wise* to the rational ends of the life of man. You shall now never find these men much employing themselves with reading or hearing of Playes, or reading *Romances*, they abhor the feeding of their Souls with Coals, and Dirt, and cheating themselves with lies and falshoods, nor debauching their minds with sordid and filthy Books and discourses, they will be reading Books of *History* and *Philosophy*, which may serve their Souls as to the most noble ends of life; and indeed such as are come thus far, are yet but come on to the highest forms of good Pagans. But the good Christian is got beyond these, he hath discerned that God is the greatest good, and the fruition and enjoyment of God is the fruition of the greatest good, and that the enjoyment of God, an acquaintance, fellowship, and communion with him, is more to be desired than all the world besides. Whatsoever Books or discourses therefore have either in their own nature, or by any ordination of God, a tendency to bring the Soul of Man to a knowledge of God, to an acquaintance or communion with God appear to him the best Books, the best discourses in the world, and this he doth by as rational an operation of his Soul, as a sober Man counteth a true History better than a *Romance*, or a Lecture of *Moral* or *Natural Philosophy* better than a *Play*, or an *idle sight*. All floweth from his right notion of his chief end, for that being once truly fixed in the Soul of Man, he measureth other things by their tendency, or no tendency, as means in order to that end. It is because the sensual Man maketh the *satisfaction of his senses the end of his life*, that he thirsts after merry Meetings, Balls, and Dances, and Revellings and Chamberings, and Wantonness, and Books of fine

word

words, and full of filthy, or at best witty discourses, as the best Book to spend his time in, and discourses to spend his time upon. It is because the moral Man hath fixed upon the ennobling his mind with human knowledge, and habits of moral vertue, that he despiseth those things before-mentioned, as contrary to his design, and the main end of his life, and chuseth rather the moral writings of *Seneca*, *Aristotle*, *Plato*, &c. than any other idle Books to spend his thoughts upon. And it is because the true Christian hath fixed upon the glorifying of God, and the saving of his own Soul, as the great end of his life that he thirsteth after, and hath such a delight in the Word of God, and the *Interpretation* and *application* of that (which is that which we call Preaching.) 2. Besides, the Philosopher observeth, that *like delighteth in its like*. Look what complexion the Soul is of, such things it desireth, thirsteth after, and delighteth in. Hence the dirty filthy Soul, where sense, and passion, and corrupt and debauched affections predominate, covets filthy Books, and filthy discourses, which are but the issues of Souls of the same complexion with itself, the Soul that is something cleaner, and hath got its passions something more subjugated unto its reason; delighteth in, and desireth Books and discourses of its own complexion, and which are the issues of Souls like unto itself. The Spiritual Man being refined to a further degree and pitch, minding the glory of God, and Spiritual things, hath a thirst after the Word, and Sermons which are the true and faithful Interpretations, & applications of that word, as being more pure and Spiritual, and so more like to it in its *renewed State*, wherein we are *transformed* into the likeness of the word. *Thy word is pure* (saith *David*) *therefore doth thy Servant love it*, Psal. 119. 140. It is as natural to the renewed Soul, to thirst after the *pure Word of God*, and Spiritual discourses from, and upon it, as it is to an impure, unrenewed Soul to thirst after filthy Books, obscene discourses, or for the Philosopher, or moral rational man to desire after, or to delight in Books, or discourses of its own complexion; especially also if we consider, that as *sober moral discourses* tend both to confirm and promove habits of morality, so the Book of God, and Spiritual discourses upon, and according to it tend to confirm and to promove Spiritual habits in the Soul.

Lastly. The Souls of believers must needs more especially desire, and delight in those which are more strictly called *Gospel-Doctrines, and discourses relating to them, because those are they which are suited to the greatest and most pressing wants of the Soul*; those are the Doctrines

rines wherein the Lord speaks peace and pardon, that contain the *words of reconciliation. I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace* (saith God by his Prophet *Isaiah.*) In the *historical part* of Scripture, God speaks instruction in wisdom to his People, and tells them the course of his Providence in the world in the government of it both with reference to his People, and to their Enemies. In the law and preceptive part of Holy Writ, and the threatnings of Holy Scripture, he tells them their duty, what is his will they should do, and avoid, and what he will do unto them in case they be disobedient to his Commandments, and do not walk in his *Statutes*, and keep his judgments. In the prophetical part of it, so far as it is but an History of what God hath said and done, he confirms them in their apprehensions and faith of Gods knowledge of future contingencies, and also concerning his faithfulness. But it is in the Doctrines of the Gospel alone, that he declareth his love to poor Souls in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, what Christ hath done and suffered for the redemption and salvation of Man, what he is yet ready to do for all such, as truly repent and believe, and accept of the Mediator. It is in that alone that he offers healing to the Nations; now every gracious Soul being one who must be supposed to have felt something of the burthen of Sin, and the wrath of God due to Man for Sin, it is no wonder if the special thirst of such a Soul be after the revelations of Christ in the Doctrines of the Gospel, as being most suited to the state of a Soul that is weary, and heavy laden, and seeking for rest, and being wearied in its own indeavours, and finding none. No wonder if such Sermons, such Preaching, be most sweet and acceptable unto it, if such portions of Scripture, such discourses from Scripture be most acceptable, and grateful to it's thoughts, and most sweet to its meditations, as being such which must deliver it from the trouble, and uneasiness, which the Law which worketh wrath hath given to it, finding itself a great transgressor of it. Thus I have doctrinally discoursed, the hunger of the Soul after the Word of God, and a communion with God in it by *reading*, *hearing*, or *meditation*, and the reasonableness of this appetite of the Soul to it. There is yet a more excellent, internal communion of the Souls communion with God in his Word, which infinitely excelleth this, and consequently is the more special object of the renewed Souls Spiritual hunger, and thirst, to which I shall speak. But I shall first make application of this discourse.

Use 1. This Notion may help us to take some measures of our

Spiri-

Spiritual State, whether we be the *Spouses* of Christ yea or no, the Souls desires, or no desires after *communion* with God in his Word: its *delight* or no *delight* in that piece of communion with God, will go a great way to determine our Spiritual State, and how it shall fare with us in the day of Judgment. I am sure *negatively* it is a good note. *He that hath no desire after, no delight in the Word of God hath nothing of God, or Christ in him.* And this is evident from all *Scripture experience*, and reason also. *Davids* experience is instead of all, though many more examples might be produced out of Holy Writ. There was never any good King of *Israel* or *Judah* but call'd for the Law of the Lord, and much desired and delighted in the Lords Prophets. It is impossible that the Word should have done any Soul good, and the savour of it not be left upon it, engaging it to prize and value it so long as it lives. I only except an extraordinary hour of temptation, in which I have known good Souls, afraid to read, and hear, but alas they are at that time not themselves, and act not from a free use of their reason. This reflects sadly,

Upon *such as neglect reading the Word.* Some indeed cannot read, 1.
I know not how to excuse these, in times and places where they have such plenty of means to learn. As I think those Parents will be inexcusable before God another day, that take not care to have their Children, when young, learned to read: So I think those grown Persons whom their Parents have neglected, inexcusable, who have not used such means as the Age affords in great plenty, to learn to read, and can hardly believe that Soul to have any fear of God, or love to God in it, that doth not apply itself to this piece of knowledge. But alas: how many can read, that hardly take the Bible in their Hands from one end of the week to the other, Surely we may conclude the Bible never did their Souls good. They cannot but have heard, that the Lord commanded the King of his People to read in the Book of the Law all the daies of his life. And by Gods order was read in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day; and can any think himself excused from reading the word? we cannot be alwaies hearing, nor doth so much knowledge come into our Souls by hearing as may by reading. Am I in none of your bosoms? Is there not amongst some of you a sad neglect of Reading the Scripture? Let me tell you it speaks you to have tasted very little, if at all, how good the Lord is.

Secondly, How sadly doth this reflect upon those who *despise* 2.
Prophecyings? It is a dreadful Text, 1 *Joh.* 4. 6. *We are of God: He*

that

that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. It is true, no Minister of Christ can say, *He is of God*, in that strict sense as the Apostles did, whose Calling was not of men, nor by men, but immediately from God. It is also true, that every one who talks out of a Pulpit is not of God. Many run whom God never sends, and you shall easily know them by the message they bring. But every faithful Minister of Christ, that faithfully openeth, and conscienciously applieth the Word of God to Peoples understandings, hearts and consciences, is *of God*; that is, he is sent of God; he is the *Ordinance of God*; and he that *knoweth God*, that hath any saving experimental knowledge of God, will hear such a one: If there be any that despiseth such Prophecying, he is not of God. Now this men may do from *looseness* and *prophaneness*, and this too many are guilty of, and by it proclaim to the world, that they were never *born again of the uncorruptible Seed of the Word*; that they never yet tasted the goodness of God in an Ordinance. There is another generation that *despise Prophecyings*, pretending to the *immediate Teachings of the Spirit of God.* I shall in my next Discourse (God willing) shew you, that no pious Soul can undervalue the Teachings of the Holy Spirit, nor think them needless, but he that looks for them, in opposition to the Teachings of the Word of God, or otherwise than by, and in the Teachings of the Word, is ignorant, knowing nothing. The Spirit brings to our remembrance the things which we have heard of God. I never yet knew a pious Soul that durst slight Reading, or powerful Preaching. I have indeed known Religious Souls neglect and despise some mens little jinglings of words in Pulpits, flaunts of Rhetorick, and playing with words, or disgorging their malice and passion, (and they deserve to be despised and abhorred of all;) but I never yet knew that pious Soul that did not hunger after the Preaching of Jesus Christ, in a plain, Scriptural, powerful manner. I would say to any that pretend to despise Sermons, pretending to the Teachings of the Spirit immediately, as *Paul* spoke to the *Galatians*, *Gal.* 3. 2. This would I learn of you; *Received you the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?* So say I, you pretend to some change of heart, to a *Receiving of the Spirit*: *Received you the Spirit* by an immediate *afflatus* or impression, or by the *Hearing of the Word?* Besides, how shall the impressions of the Spirit be known, tryed, or judged, but by the Word? for St. *John* hath taught us, 1 *Joh* 4. 1. That every Spirit is not to be believed. And the Apostle warns the

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Thessalonians, 1 *Thes.* 2. 2. *not to be shaken in mind, troubled or deceived, by Spirit, nor by Word, nor by Letter.*

I shall shut up this Discourse with a word of Exhortation: Which of us is there who hath not an ambition to be the *Lamb's Wife*, and to be thought the *Spouse of Christ*? Evidence then your selves to be such by your hunger after a communion with God in his Word, by your much Reading, much Hearing, by your meditating in the Law of the Lord night and day. For the written Word, you have no plea to the contrary, no excuse for the Word Preached; I wish Christians had more general incouragement. We have too much of of the word of man in Pulpits, too little of the Word of God; and as it is in Trade, the false and corrupt making of Wares, depretiates the Commodity, and brings it out of esteem with such as abhor to be cheated: So the abundance of false Preaching, by which I mean, not only Preaching of unsound Notions, but Preaching vain Philosophy, idle Speculations, turning Sermons into Harangues of Oratory: In short, whatsoever is not intelligible Scriptural Preaching, with a true design to shew men the way of Salvation, and to direct them into it, and in it: I call this false Preaching: We have so much of this, that it hath brought a discredit upon the Ordinance. I would have you, as our Saviour directs, *Take heed what you hear, and how you hear*, and that will oblige you to *take heed whom you hear*. But withal, *Take heed that you hear*; for God hath told you, that *Faith cometh by hearing*: He hath said, *Hear, and your Souls shall live*: And blessed be God he hath not left us without some that Preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and desire to know nothing else amongst people. I cannot tell you *how long you shall have any of the daies of the Son of Man*; work while it is day; when the night comes no man can work. We have had faithful, powerful Preaching a long time, (possibly Christ never had a Church on Earth, had such handling the Word of God so long a time) doth not the Candle begin to fail, and burn in the Socket? We have an *Ezra*'s Temple, but is not *Solomon*'s destroyed? 2. There's no such way to recover your Light, and keep it with you, as to cry after it, and to make use of it while you have it. God will not take away his Word from hungry Children. Where are our *Rogers, Sheppard, Hooker, Fenner, Preston, Sibbs, Burroughs, and others*? It's time to recover your Appetites, that you may recover your Bread. 3. *Consider, you that love the Lord*, will be *the first that want it*. Prodigals of their Souls, can feed upon any Husks, though

they fill their Bellies with nothing but wind and crudities. That you may recover your Appetite to the Word, *Purge your selves of your lusts.* I shall conclude with that of *James*, *Jam.* 1. 21, 22. *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your Souls: But be you doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Sermon VI.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

IT is not, *Let me hear the words of his mouth*; though that be intended, the words of God's mouth, may be brought to us by men like unto our selves, as they were spoken to the *Israelites* of old by the *Prophets*; the Spouse begs not only the *Words* of her Lord, but that they might be spoken from himself: She beggeth his words, but so that they may be *kisses*, tokens of his love and favour to her Soul: She beggeth not only a more external Communion with God, by which God communicates his Will to our *exteriour senses*, but an inward *Communion*, that God by his Word and Gospel would speak unto her heart, that the Word might not be to her a meer sound, much less the *savour of death unto death*, but the savour of life unto life.

Prop. *The great desire of a gracious Soul, is after an inward spiritual Communion with Christ, in his Word and Ordinances.*

This is a Point not so well generally understood by the croud of Professors; suffer me therefore to spend a few words in the Explication of it.

All *Communion* importeth mutual and reciprocal Communication.

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It is an action wherein two Persons do communicate themselves each to other. *Communion with God*, implieth God's communication of himself to his creature, and the creature's communication of it self unto God. To restrain my discourse to the present Subject I am about; There is a more *external Communion* we have with God, with reference to his Word, in the *reading it*, or *hearing it* read or Preacht, or *meditating* in it. God then communicates his Will to us, by the help of Letters, Words and Syllables, by which we understand things, or by the *voice* of *his Ministers*, sent in his Name to open his mind and will unto us; and we communicate with God, giving him the homage of our Eyes and Ears, our common sense and imaginations; this I call a more external Communion: And there is a more *spiritual internal Communion*, which a Soul hath with God in it. I call it a *Communion*, because God in it doth *communicate* himself to the Soul, and the Soul *communicateth it self to God*. God speaketh by his Word *to the heart*, and the *heart* receiveth the Divine Impressions, and surrendreth up it self to the Will of God. In the other there is no more than a communication of the *Divine Will* (on God's part) nor any more than the homage of our exterior senses, our faculty of reading and hearing, the service of our *Eyes* and *Ears*, our common sense, and power of *Imagination*, and of our understanding receiving the notions of Truth. In this Communion with God in his Word, there is not only on God's part a communication of *God's Will*, but also of *God's Power*, by which the Soul is 1. *Irradiated as to the understanding*, inabled to see things in another light more fully and clearly 2. *Subdued as to the Will*, so as the man is made willing and obedient to the heavenly Revelation, transformed into the likeness of the Word, so convinced of the truth of it, that it can no longer withstand it, whether it be a *word of Instruction*, which is the Object of our Faith; or a *word of Reproof*, for conviction of Sin, or a *word of Consolation*, for refreshing the Soul; the Soul can no longer deny, or dispute, or doubt of the Proposition, no longer stand out against the Precept, no longer refuse to be comforted. The Word of the Lord comes here to the inward part of the Soul. 2. There is a *further Communication on man's part of himself to God*. In the former Communion he only lends God his Eye to read his Will, his Ear to hear it, his imaginative power to think upon it, his *Passive Intellect* or Power to receive Notions of Truth. Here he *communicates* his whole Soul to God, his *Will* and *Affections*, his whole Man. It is true, here God speaks

first, we do only *velle quum volumus, agere quum agimur* (as *Augustine* expresseth it) that is, we only will when we are made willing, and act when we are first moved and acted. There are some who are great Patrons for the Power of Man's Will as to things spiritual, that would elude those Texts about the *Teachings of the Spirit*, and the Teachings of the *Anointing* spoken of by St. *John*, by asserting, *That there is such a constant concomitancy of the holy Spirit with the Preaching of the Gospel, that whosoever will may be willing, and obedient, and believe, and repent, and be obedient.* I should hearken much to this Notion, if the Authors of it could give me a good account how it is then, that of two persons hearing the same Sermon, and sitting under the same ministration of the Spirit, one man only hears it, thinks upon it a little, and receiveth some notions of it, to fit his Tongue with discourse; another hath his heart changed by it, and transformed into the Image of God, and wholly changed as to his Will and Affections, and his whole Conversation. That it is so is demonstrably true, I would know whence it is, unless they will make man *a God unto himself*; that is, the first cause of *truly good and spiritual motions.* Now this internal Communion with God in his Word, which in Scripture is called the *Teaching of the Spirit*, and the Teaching of the *Anointing*, being such as few are acquainted with, is little known in the world, and therefore some count it *Canting*, and so unwarily *blaspheme* the Teacher, and cannot understand any thing else by it than *Ministerial Teaching*. Others again can understand no *Teaching of the Spirit in and by Ordinances*, but dream that Souls under the Teachings of the Spirit, must live above Duties and Ordinances, and so turn it into meer *Enthusiasm*, immediate impressions (which they pretend to) from the holy Spirit of God. It may be therefore worth our while to understand it a little.

You read of it propheſied of old, *Isa.* 54. 17. *That the Children of the Church should be all taught of the Lord.* You read in the New Testament of *words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. Yea it teacheth us not words only, but things, 1 *John* 2. 27. *But the Anointing which you have received in him, abideth in you, and you need not that any man should teach you; but as the same Anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lye.* Yea it was Christ's own Promise, *Joh.* 14. 26. *But the Comforter, which the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance whatsoever you have heard from me.* So as that there is a *Teaching of*

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the Spirit, is out of all doubt. The only Queſtions are;

1. Whether this be concomitant with Miniſterial Teachings, and ſuperadded to them; which we maintain againſt thoſe who are for *immediate Teachings* in raptures, and by immediate impreſſions; *or a thing ſeparate from them*, and to which *Miniſterial Teachings* are rather hinderances than any furtherance; which is what we deny. For though we limit not the Holy One of *Iſrael*, but ſay, that as he did of Old, thus teach his Prophets and Apoſtles; ſo he may by more immediate Impreſſions and Revelations, teach his People ſtill what they are to do, or to avoid. Yet we ſay, that the Book of Scripture being finiſhed and ſealed, no ſuch Revelations are by any to be expected; and if any man think he hath any ſuch Impreſſions, Revelations, or extraordinary Teachings, they muſt be proved by *the Word*, with which, if they do not agree, they proceed not from the holy Spirit of God, neither have they any Light in them. Secondly, 1.

2. Whether the *Teachings of the Spirit* be any thing more than *Miniſterial Teachings* in the Preachings of the Goſpel, which Teachings have ſuch a conſtant preſence of the Spirit of Grace with them, that if a man will, he may with thoſe Aids and Aſſiſtances do what God requireth of him in order to his Eternal Salvation, and avoid what God would have him to avoid. We affirm they are, and that there is no ſuch power in the Will of Man, in the uſe of thoſe common Aids and Aſſiſtances, and that there is a *Teaching* of the Spirit in the uſe of the Word, far beyond the power and virtue of the Word. The Object of this Teaching we make to be the *Elect* of God. Reprobates as well as choſen Veſſels, may be taught by the Miniſterial Teaching of the Word, and have that external Communion with God in his Word, which I before mentioned; but the Elect of God, and ſuch as ſhall be eternally ſaved only, know any thing of theſe Teachings; and to ſuch are reſtricted throughout all Scripture, in ſuch places as make any mention of them. The more *immediate Object* is the *Underſtanding*, *Will* and *Affections*. The Miniſterial Teaching reacheth the *Eyes* and *Ears*, and *exteriour ſenſes*, and thence cometh into the thoughts, and into the underſtanding more confuſedly and imperfectly; it reacheth not the more inward part of the Soul. The things of the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10, 12. are revealed to thoſe who have received the Spirit; *V.* 14. *The Natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, nor can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* I therefore call it an internal

ſpiritual

spiritual Communion with God in his Word. But yet for the fuller understanding of this, it is reasonable that I should shew you how the *Spirit* Teacheth the Elect Soul in and by the Ordinance, that you may see and understand what there is more in this *Spiritual Teaching*, in this internal Communion with God in his Word and Ordinances, than in the meer *Teaching of the Letter*, *meer Ministerial Teaching* separated from this.

I told you before these Teachings were not by *immediate Enthusiasms*, *Impressions*, or *Revelations* of new things; for, *I pray observe*, there is a twofold *Revelation*; the one I may call *A simple*, *immediate first Revelation*. Thus God of old taught the *Patriarchs* and *Moses*, and the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles*. All Scripture was *by inspiration from God*, and holy men spake as they were inspired by God. Thus God was pleased to teach the Guides of his Church, before the holy Scripture was written, at least fully written, and a Curse annexed (as a Seal to that Book) to them that should add any thing to it. This is a Teaching some would be at, but what need of it, if the Scriptures (as the Apostle tells us) are *able to make the man of God wise to salvation*, *furnished to every good work*?

Secondly, There is another kind of *Revelation*, which we may for distinction sake, call a *compounded*, *mediate Revelation*; it is the *further Revelation* of what God hath revealed in his Word; but we wanted a proper *medium* to see it in; we were blind and dark, and our Eyes stuck in the bark and surface of Scripture. Thus it is yet true, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. That God revealeth to his People by his Spirit, *the deep things of God*, *the things which Eye hath not seen*, *nor hath Ear heard*, *nor can it enter into the Heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*. But of this I shall speak more by and by.

That I may therefore give you (at least) my apprehension concerning the due notion of the *Spirit's Teaching*, so as it shall not be confounded with bare *Ministerial Teachings*, which I take to be a great debasing of the notion of it, on the one hand, nor be made opposite to *Ministerial Teaching*, and that made useless on the other hand: I shall shew you that in order to the Salvation of a Soul, there is a Teaching of the Spirit necessary added to, or over and above *Ministerial Teachings*. I shall open it in four or five particulars.

1. *The Spirit teacheth by special Illumination.* There is a common Illumination, which is the Effect of the Spirit also; but of the Spirit working in a way of *common grace*, by which men receive the common notions of Religious Truths. There are two diseases or faults

faults in the Soul of a Christian, which hinder its learning spiritual things.

1. The first is, a *listlesness, or indisposition to learn or hear anything of that nature.* You may see this in mens slighting of the Word of God, till God hath wrought some saving work in their hearts, they have no mind to read the holy Scriptures, nor yet to hear them faithfully opened and applied: And could you but enter into peoples hearts (which yet you may know by what was the temper of your own hearts before God wrought a change on them) you would see this yet further confirmed unto you; this God in conversion removes; but this is not that which I have here to do with.

2. There is besides this a natural *blindness* and *deafness*, that a poor creature cannot see nor hear. In *Jer.* 5. 21. you find these words, *Hear now this O you foolish people, and void of understanding, who have Eyes, and see not, Ears, and hear not!* Every natural man is one of these who have Eyes, and see not, Ears, and hear not. The mysteries of the Kingdom of God are foolishness to the natural Soul; what a notion of *Regeneration* had *Nicodemus? Joh.* 3. what notions of *Justification, Union with Christ*, the *indwelling of the Spirit, Faith, &c.* have some others discovered? Natural men have *rational Souls*, as well as others, and by the workings of them understand many Propositions in Religion, which shine in the light of *Natural Reason*; but there are *Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*, Doctrines that shine only in the light of Scripture; of these they understand little or nothing: Nay, for the more common notions of Religion concerning the *Immortality of the Soul*, the *Nature of God*, the *Doctrines of Faith, Repentance, Good works*; when once the heart is changed, the Soul seeth them in quite another light, and hath quite another notion of them than it had before, while it was only under the instruction of *Reason*, and the Ministerial instruction of Men. *Paul* prayeth for the *Ephesians*, *Ephes.* 1. 17, 18. *That the God of Glory would give them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him, the Eyes of their understanding being inlightened*, &c. It is the Spirit that inlighteneth the understanding, and inableth it to a fuller, and further comprehension of, and insight into the Spiritual Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. When the Disciples came to our Saviour, *Matth.* 13. 10. and asked him, why he spake to the multitude in Parables, he tells them, *v.* 11. because *it was given to his Disciples to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*, but to the multitude it was not given. From hence have proceeded the vain speculations

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and reasonings of one part of the world, that have pretended to more Learning and Knowledge than others; and the prophane scoffs and mockings of a more silly part of it, at the greatest Mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Some by Wisdom know not God, being under the meer conduct of reason, and tying up themselves to the meer informations of that natural Eye: Some knowing less, have blasphemed God, and the holy things of God, counting their own *Ignorance* a sufficient excuse for their *Blasphemy*. None knoweth the things of God aright, but he that is under the *Teaching of the Spirit*. Take the first Principle of all Religion, *viz. That the holy Scriptures are the Word of God*; no Soul knoweth this as he ought to know it, but he that is under a further Teaching than that of the *Church*, or of *Reason*; much less doth it know the momentous Propositions that are contained in those holy Writings. To all knowledge there is required, 1. *A sufficient Revelation.* 2. *A sufficiency in our faculty to receive and comprehend the Revelation.* The holy Scriptures are a sufficient Revelation of all Truth. There are no Mysteries of the Kingdom of God to be admitted, but what are there revealed. But we want a *visive faculty*, a sufficiency in our understandings to apprehend, and to conceive them, till the Lord by the finger of his Spirit toucheth our Ears, and saith, *Ephatha*, be opened. When *Peter* made his confession of Christ, for which Christ blessed him, Christ addeth; *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it to him.*

2. Secondly, The Spirit teacheth by a *special Application of the Word to the Conscience.* The Word as written is no more directed to one man than to another; it equally concerneth all men. When we Preach we are like *Benhadad's Archers*, we draw Bows at adventures, and let the Lord's Arrows fly, who is it that directs them betwixt the joints of one harness more than another? that when we reprove sin, and denounce the Judgments of God against it, saith to this or that sinner, *Thou art the man*; or when we display the grace of the Gospel, and open the Promises of God, teacheth one Soul to apply them, while another refuseth the comfort of them: All special Application of the Word to the Soul, (which indeed is the true Teaching) is from the holy Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that was promised, *Joh.* 16. 8. to convince the world of *Sin*, *Righteousness* and *Judgment*. It is the Spirit which convinceth the Soul of *Truth*, of *Wrath*, of *Love*, indeed of any thing of Spiritual Revelation. It is the Spirit that makes the Word stick to the Soul: All the Ministers on Earth cannot make a *threatning* to stick to the heart of an hard and impenitent

impenitent sinner, nor a Promise stick to a *broken and contrite heart*, until the Spirit comes and joyneth with the Ministration of the Word. We sometimes meditate of the Lord's terrours, and compose Discourses with the best Art we are able, and in the vanity of our hearts, are, it may be, sometimes saying within our selves, Surely this Sermon will alarum some sinners, open some blind Eyes. Another time we study the Grace of the Gospel, and with the best Art we can compose Discourses to affect Souls with the sense of the love of God in Jesus Christ, and are ready to think, surely this Discourse will affect some Souls, and bring them to love and admire Jesus Christ, to seek to him for pardon and forgiveness, to receive him as the Saviour of man, as their Saviour. We go about our work, and when we have done, we see cause to return unto the Lord that sent us, mourning, and saying, We *have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nothing, and in vain.* The Spirit of the Lord moves not upon the face of our waters; there's not one Soul washed from its filthiness: The Angel comes not and troubles the waters, though our people lye from year to year at the Pool, yet possible not a Soul is cured of its infirmity. The Word is but a *dead letter*, it is the *Spirit that quickeneth* whom he pleaseth. The Word, the Minister teacheth us by communicating notions, but the Spirit only teacheth by particular and effectual Application of notions to our Souls advantage.

Thirdly, *The Spirit teacheth by evident Demonstration.* There is a threefold Demonstration of things. 1. The *Demonstration of Sense.* Thus it is demonstrable, that the Fire burneth, that Snow is white; all know that spiritual things come under no such *Demonstration.* 2. The *Demonstration of Reason*; thus a proper effect is a demonstration of the cause: Some Propositions in Religion are indeed capable of this demonstration. The *Creation* demonstrateth a Creator, *&c.* But alas! there are very few things in Religion that fall under the demonstration of Reason; most Propositions of that nature depend upon *Revelation*; and the truth of them is to be judged from thence. That *Christ is the eternal Son of God*; *That he took upon him our Nature*; *died for Sinners*: In short, all the main Propositions of Religion, all Propositions immediately concerning our Salvation, all Articles of Faith, are things which fall not under the demonstration of *Reason.* 3. There is therefore Thirdly, a *Demonstration of the Spirit.* St. *Paul* tells us his Preaching was in the *Demonstration of the Spirit*, that is, attended with the *Demonstration* 3.

of the Spirit; and (let Scoffers say what they will) if this *Demonstration of the Spirit* attendeth not all our Preaching, we do but beat the Air, and labour in vain. *Logicians* rightly tell us of two sorts of Arguments: The one they call *Topicks*; the other *Demonstrations*: The difference of them lies in the effects they have upon our minds: The former make a thing only probable to us, the other make it certain. If a notion appears only probable to us, we have some doubts and fears, and suspicions about the truth of it. Nothing is demonstrated to us, but that of the truth of which we have no further doubts, against which we can make no Objections. Now nothing but the Spirit of God thus teacheth. The Gifts of Ministers are various; the discourses of some may be meer words, oratorial discourses; these of all others have least influence upon any but airy Souls; others more mind their work, and knowing that nothing but the Word of God layeth hold on the Conscience, endeavour to prove what they say by holy Writ; and some in this are more happy than others, as they are more skilled in the Scriptures, and the true sense of them; others are more *rational* in their discourses, men of great parts, good reason; though the second sort of these best discharge their Office, yet the effect of the best is to make a thing but probable to the Soul. The Soul will find out some distinctions, excuses and evasions, until it comes under this *Teaching of the Spirit*; it is an ease thing to make it probable to the Soul, that it is in a road and high-way to Hell and eternal destruction; that sin is the vilest thing in the world; that there is no way of Salvation but by Jesus Christ: In short, any Gospel Proposition may easily be made probable, either by reason working from connate natural Principles, or (at least to those Souls that own the Scriptures to be the Word of God) from Propositions of holy Writ; but still I say, till the holy Spirit of God comes to teach the Soul, the Soul will not be fully perswaded, indeed not at all perswaded, but have this, and the other thing to say against it. Nothing silenceth the Soul to the revelation of any Spiritual Truth, so as it disputeth it no more (unless it be perhaps in a fit, or under some great temptation) but this Demonstration of the Spirit.

4. Fourthly, The Spirit teacheth by *Recapitulation, or bringing to remembrance*. I have my ground for this from that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 14. 6. *The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* This

Teaching

Teaching by way of *bringing to remembrance*, is an excellent way of Teaching. It is one reason why Christians profit no more by hearing, because they never meditate; they seldom or never call to *remembrance* what they have heard. If a *Schoolmaster* should learn a Child his Grammar Rules once, and never make him bring them again to his remembrance, he would learn but little. An improvement in notional knowledge of spiritual things, doth depend upon often calling to remembrance what we have heard. But the Spirits bringing to remembrance is yet a more excellent thing, and there is the same disproportion betwixt our own bringing to remembrance, something we have read of the Word of God, or heard out of it, and the holy Spirit's bringing to remembrance; that there is betwixt *Ministerial Instruction*, and the *Instruction* of the Spirit of God at the first. As man's instruction and first teaching reacheth no further than that power of man's Soul, by which he receiveth the bare notion of a thing, and that imperfectly too; but the holy Spirit instructeth the heart, and reins, and teacheth the secret and inward parts of the Soul: So man's *bringing to remembrance* things which we have heard from God, doth no more than revive the notion of them in our understandings, making the first prints of them more deep, plain, and legible: But the holy Spirit's bringing things to remembrance, is a bringing them to the remembrance of the whole Soul, renewing those motions of the will and affections which it taught the Soul with reference to those Propositions, which by Ministerial Teaching, or by reading the Word, were first, by the help of our Eyes, and Ears, brought into our Souls, and carried by the holy Spirit of God further into the understanding, the will and affections, by which the Soul is anew instructed, convinced, comforted, strengthened, *&c.* to which our repetitions of, and discourses of what we have read and heard, serve but as means to so noble an end; and without the attaining of that indeed, is of very little significancy to our Souls real profit and advantage.

Lastly, The Spirit's Teaching, is by *strengthening and quickening the Soul to practice.* We call upon men *not to be hearers of the Word, but doers of it also*; but we cannot make them so, we cannot give them an inward Principle of Life, either *strengthening, or quickening them to do what we call to them for*; and this is the reason why we oft-times labour in vain, and spend our strength for nothing and in vain. Old *Adam* is too hard for young *Melanchon.* We see this in the experience of every School-Boy. The best Teaching is by 5.

practice. Let a Child learn his Rules never so well, he understands them not till he comes to reduce them to practice; therefore the best Teachers put Children upon practice as soon as they can. *Solomon* tells us, *Pro* 1.7. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning* of Knowledge. The end of all Knowledge is practice. We therefore desire to know, that we might practice; & he that hath not been taught to practice in the things of God, hath indeed learned nothing. By this time I hope I have shewed you, that admitting the teaching of the Letter, and of the Ministers, there is none left for the teaching of the Spirit; and that there is a vast difference betwixt a meer external Communion with God in his Word, and an internal Communion with him in and by the Word; so as we have no reason either to despise *Ordinances*, or to rest in that external homage which we pay unto God in the observance of them, and sufficient reason why the Soul of an understanding Christian should not be satisfied with the reading and hearing the words of Christ's mouth, without the kisses of his mouth. For the proof of the Proposition, I shall give you first the instance of holy *David*; take it as it lieth before you, *Ps.* 63. 1, 2. *O God* (saith he) *thou art my God, early will I seek thee, in a dry and thirsty Land where no water is*; he means no waters of the Sanctuary. The title of that *Psalm* tells you, that *Psalm* was composed when *David was in the wilderness of Judah*, in the time of his persecution by *Saul*, when he had not the liberty of God's Publick Ordinances. In this condition he thirsteth, he longeth, for what? *for thee*, saith he. Further yet, *v.* 2. *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary; Because thy loving-kindness is better than life.* You see *David*'s desires are not terminated in a coming into the Sanctuary, but a seeing the *power and glory* of God *in the Sanctuary*, in an understanding the loving-kindness of God revealed in his Sanctuary. And (in the expression of the same passion) *Psal.* 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God: My Soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* It is manifest by the last words, that the thing which *David* thirsted after, was a communion with God in the Ordinances of his Worship; but yet not after a meer external communion with him. *My Soul panteth after thee O God, for God, the living God.* So in *Psal.* 119. *v.* 18. *Open my Eyes O Lord, that I might discern the wonders of the Law*; not my Ears only to hear thy Law; or my Eyes, that I may read the Doctrine of the Law, but that I *may discern the wonders of thy Law*. *Paul* did not think it enough that the *Ephesians*

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and *Colossians* had the Word of God amongst them, and Preach'd to them by Apostles, and men immediately deriving from them; but for the former he prayes, *that the Eyes of their understanding might be opened*; and for the latter, *That the Word of God might dwell in them richly*; but what need have we of any Scripture in the case? I appeal to the experience of every good Christian, what Soul is there that knoweth any thing of God, or of the nature and end of Ordinances, that can be satisfied with meer reading of a Chapter, of hearing of a Sermon, without finding his heart at all affected with what he reads or hears, any operation of it at all upon his heart and conscience. *Formalists* indeed, who think that God is pleased with noises and empty sounds, and with meer bodily labour, which profiteth nothing, may be satisfied with going to Church, and hearing a discourse from a Pulpit, and that too of small or no tendency to do good to a Soul; but it is impossible that a conscientious Christian, that looks upon Ordinances as opportunities, under a Divine appointment, wherein God hath promised to meet the Souls of people and bless them, wherein God hath appointed to come, and to speak unto peoples Souls, should be satisfied with the meer external action or homage, but he must thirst after that blessing which God hath promised to his people, when he meets them in places, or duties, wherein he hath recorded his Name to dwell. But I shall shew you further, how highly reasonable this is upon this *Hypothesis*, That there is such an inward communion of God with his People in his Institutions.

One reason may be, because *a meer outward Communion with God is not distinguishing mercy*; and this is known to every Soul who knoweth any thing of God. *Pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt*, (said *Augustine*) Hypocrites as well Saints go to Church, hear *Sermons*, read *Chapters*. This is a favour God gives to all within the pale of his Church, which is a field hath Tares in it as well as Wheat; a *Drag-net*, whose swallow hath in it good Fish, as well as bad. Every Hypocrite may yield God the homage of his Eye and Ear, and some thoughts. I shewed you before, that it is of the nature of a Child of God to thirst after distinguishing mercies: This is that which such Souls long after, to have some tokens of good from God, which may speak God's loving-kindness to them. They are awakened to a sense of their lost condition by nature, and to a sense of Eternity; and they know nothing but the Adoption of Sons; nothing but an Union with Christ can do their Souls any good with reference to their greatest wants. Besides, such Souls as they thirst after what

as best suited to their Souls greatest wants; so they have learned to value the *Love* and *Favour* of God above all earthly things: They know that all within the pale of the Church, are not in the favour of God; *many are called, and few are chosen. Strait is the way, and narrow is the gate that leadeth to eternal life, and few there be that find it.* Many shall seek to enter, and shall not enter.

2. Secondly, *A meer external Communion with God, is upon the point no Communion with him.* It is indeed improperly called a Communion with him. *God* (saith our Saviour) *is a Spirit*, and from thence a Christian concludeth, that those who *worship him, must worship him in Spirit and Truth.* I told you before, That in all Communion, there must be a *mutual communication.* In our *Communion with God*, God communicateth something of himself to the Soul, and the Soul must communicate it self in some degrees unto God. Now in our meer external Communion with God, in the hearing of his Word, or reading of it, what doth God communicate to us? nothing but the *revelation of his Will* to our exteriour senses, or common sense and understanding, and the last but in an imperfect degree. What doth man communicate of himself to God? he lends him his Eye, to gather up the Letters of a Book to present them to his understanding; he lends him his Ear, to hear sounds, which may carry some notions of God to the understanding; he lends him a little bodily presence and labour, to do for a little time what he hath commanded him to do; but all this while the man communicateth not his *heart and soul*, his *will and affections to God*; nor doth God communicate any thing of his power and goodness unto the Soul. So that if we consider God as a Spirit, and who requireth of us the homage of the Soul and inward man, it is upon the point no fellowship and communion with God at all.

3. Thirdly, A meer external fellowship and communion with God in his Word (if it may be so called) wants those two *adjuncts, which most allure and inflame the Soul with desires*; they are *pleasure*, and *profit*: There is no true pleasure in it, no true profit and advantage to a Soul arising from it. I noted to you before, that one reason of the Soul's thirst after communion with God in his Word, is the pleasure and sweetness which every pious Soul findeth in it. *David* saith, the Word was *sweeter to his taste than the Honey and the Honey-comb*; and he saith, *That one day in the Lord's Courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.* But let us a little wistly consider wherein the sweetness of the Word lieth; what maketh the Bible to

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be sweeter than another Book? or a Sermon to be a more pleasant discourse than any other? The sweetness cannot lie in the gratifying of our exteriour senses, or of our fancy; much reading is a weariness to the flesh; so is much hearing, much study: The sweetness of the Word of God, and discourses out of it, lies in the fittedness of the revelations there, and of such discourses, to the distresses, and spiritual necessities of the Soul, and the insight the Word gives us into the great things of God, the great Mysteries of the Kingdom of God: Now no pleasure, no delight, no sweetness of this nature ariseth to, or in any Soul, from a meer external communion with God in it. Hence it is that carnal unregenerate men had rather spend four or five hours at a Play, or a Musick-meeting, or Ball, than one at a Sermon; they find no sweetness, no pleasure at all in the Word. The Preacher indeed may be as one that hath the voice of a pleasant lovely Song, and have some witty sentences; this may please them; or if they be persons that are prophane, and hate all Religion and Godliness, he may use his wit in some jeers and squibs at Religion, and this may tickle their lusts a little; but a discourse out of Scripture tending to the true ends of Preaching, informing the Judgment in the Doctrines of Faith, or persuading the practice of Godliness, are the most unpleasant sounds in the world to such mens Ears. There is no Soul breathing, that takes, or can take any pleasure from, or find any sweetness in *reading*, or *hearing*, that experienceth no *inward communion with God* in the action, or at least that desires none. 2. A second great *Attractive* and mover of our desires, is *profit and advantage*; and in this case it must be the profit and advantage of our Souls; for they are actions from which no worldly profit and gain doth arise ordinarily. Now all the profit that can be so much as imagined to arise from the world, as meerly read in our Bibles, or heard opened from the Ministers of the Gospel, or *meditated upon*, can be nothing but some *superficial notional knowledge in the things of God.* Knowledge indeed is an excellent thing, and as pleasant to an ingenuous Soul as Light is to the Eye, and such a Soul counts it amongst his gains, and this may, and doth draw out not only true, and good, and pious Souls, to read, and hear Sermons, and study the Scriptures, but it may, and doth entice and allure others. But the pious Soul seeth a profit beyond this he hath read, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *That the holy Scriptures are able to make a man wise to salvation, through Faith which is in Jesus Christ.* V. 17. *To make the man of God perfect, throughly furnished to every good work.* He hath heard

that

that good words from thence have made Souls better, when sorrow hath made the heart to stoop; this is the profit, this the advantage which he promiseth unto himself from the Word of God; this makes him thirst after a real, inward, spiritual communion with God in his Word; he knows nothing less than this can answer the ends which his Soul aimeth at. That it is not being in the Sanctuary, but his *seeing the power and glory of God in the Sanctuary*, which must effect this. Hence it is, that though a more External communion with God in his word be sweet and delirable to him, yet he cannot take up with it, but he thirsteth after the Teachings of his Spirit, in and by the Word. But I see I must leave much of this discourse to other opportunities.

Sermon VII.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

4. THere is yet another Reason to be assigned, and added to what you have already heard, why an understanding pious Soul cannot be satisfied with a bare external Communion with God in his Word. *That is the danger which it apprehends from such a performance, when the Soul resteth in it, and takes up with it*, Heb. 4. 12. The Apostle telleth us, *The word of God is quick and powerful.* Whatsoever means are used in order to an end, if it be of a quick and operative Nature, if it reacheth not the end, it certainly doth harm. *Physick* that is quick and operative, if it conduceth not to the healing of the Body, usually impairs it, and doth it harm. The *hearing and reading of the word* are means in order to the Salvation of our Souls, by the working of Faith in us, changing our hearts, and transforming us into its own likeness, if they profit not in order to that end they certainly prejudice the Soul. Isa. 55. 10. *As the rain cometh down from Heaven, and the Snow, and returneth not thither but watereth the Earth — So shall my word be that goeth out of my*

Mouth.

Mouth. The Apostle lets us know, that *Ministers in preaching the Gospel, are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.* V. 16. *To the one they are the savour of death unto death, and to the other, the savour of life unto life.* We read in the Gospel of two effects of the Word Preached by Christ and the Apostles; some *believed*, others were *hardened.* This must necessarily make a pious thinking Soul, that considereth *reading* and *hearing the Word*, as they indeed are, not as *ends*, but as *means* in order to a more noble end, that it cannot but long after this *spiritual inward communion with God* in these *Institutions.* There's nothing more to be dreaded than an *hardned heart*; and without this inward Teaching of the Spirit of God in and by the Word, the Soul certainly hardeneth, and groweth worse by and under it. I shall now come to make some Application of this discourse.

From it you may learn, *That there is a more internal communion with God in his Word, than the most of common hearers are aware of.* Use 1. God's speaking to our Eyes and Ears, our common sense and understanding is one thing, his speaking to our *hearts*, to our *will* and *affections* is another thing. It is one thing for a man or woman to give God his bodily presence, his Eyes, and his Ears in an Ordinance; another thing for the Soul to give up his will in it to comply with the will of God in what he shall reveal unto it. I am afraid this is a notion is little either understood, or attended to. Men and women think they have done their work, and fulfilled their duty, if they have but read a little in their Bibles, and come to Church to hear a Sermon, never regarding what inward communion they have had with God either in the one or the other; and look at no further *Communication* of God unto them, than to let them know his will; nor at any further communicating themselves unto God, than in lending him the presence of their outward man, and the more out-parts and powers of their Souls. This apprehension of men makes them stand amazed at God's Peoples being so fond of Sermons, and running after them. Indeed, were this all that good men and women expected, they might possibly not be so exceedingly thirsty after them, though even a notional knowledge of the will of God, is no contemptible thing; but they have further expectations upon Ordinances than this amounteth to. They said, *Isa.* 2. 3. *Come you, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of* Jacob, *and he will teach us his waies, and we will walk in his paths.* They know that God promised of old, That *wheresoever he recorded*

recorded his name to dwell, there he would meet his people and bless them. And that the same Promise extendeth to the New Testament, and that there the Lord hath promised, *where two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midst amongst them*; which Promise being not of his Essential presence, (for so he is never absent from us) but concerning the presence of his grace, it is a promise of *blessing*, so as they are not satisfied without some token of God's favour and blessing.

2. Br. From this discourse also may be concluded, *in what communion with God through the Spirit lieth.* Some would have it to lie in meer *Enthusiastical raptures*, impressions and revelations, and that the way to enjoy it, is to cast off all Forms, all Duties and Ordinances; these are the things they make to be the *things that are above*, mentioned in *Col.* 3. 1. Certainly there is a form of sound Doctrine, which the Apostle *Paul* commendeth the *Romans* for yielding obedience to, *Rom.* 6. 17. *A form of sound words*, which he commandeth *Timothy to hold fast*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. These are not that *form of Godliness* in men that deny the power of it, which the Apostle speaks of in that Epistle. There are Duties and Ordinances, to be above which, is to be above the Rule which God hath given us. Our Souls communion with God through the Spirit, is not out of Ordinances, but in and by them. The Teaching of the Letter is not opposed, but subordinated to the Teaching of the Spirit. There is room enough for the Teaching of the holy Spirit, after the Minister hath done what he can to teach us; nor is it to be blasphemed by ill tongued men, because themselves do not understand what it means; they only speak evil of the things they know not. The Power of God upon the heart fastening the words we read and hear, upon our hearts and consciences, as a Nail in a sure place, is a thing only known unto the Souls that have had experience of it.

3. Br. But the great thing I desire you might be instructed in from this discourse, is, *The difference betwixt a prophane person, and hypocrites, and the true Children of God, which may be discerned from their affections to the Word of God.* The prophane person wholly despiseth and slighteth the Word of God, both the written Word, and the Word Preached; it serveth him for nothing but a subject to exercise his prophane wit upon. The Hypocrite driving another design glorying in shew and appearance; he must have some pretended respect at least to the Word of God; but he rests meerly in reading or in hearing, and regardeth not either how far

God

God in the Word communicates himself to him, nor yet how far he communicates his Soul unto God in the Ordinance. Let an Hypocrite go with a multitude, and hear a Sermon, he hath enough if he can but say, I have been at the Ordinance, whether his Soul hath been at all instructed or affected; whether any Word of God hath come nigh to his heart, laid any hold upon his conscience yea or no; he hath no true thirst after any communion with God in the Ordinance; if he hath been but seen in the Lord's Courts, or at most be furnished with matter of discourse to talk of amongst Christians, so as they may take him to be a Disciple, his ends are satisfied. But it is otherwise with a Child of God; he is troubled when he cometh from an Ordinance, if he doth not find he hath had some communion with God in the Ordinance. That God hath either more sealed, and further confirmed some Truth to his Soul, or convinced him of some sin, or comforted him with some Promise; some way or other spoken unto his heart. Methinks the difference betwixt an Hypocrite and a Child of God in this case may be resembled, by the going of a Child with another companion (who is no Child) to a Father's house, where they find themselves splendidly entertained; but the Child seeth not his *Father's face*; the Child's companion is pleased, and comes home talking, and boasting of his entertainment; but the Child's heart is sad; the end of the Child's Journey was to see his Father's face, and to have his Father's blessing; without this the good chear doth him no good. The *formal Hypocrite* comes home from Ordinances, pleasing himself that he hath been at Church, that he hath heard a quaint learned discourse, and his tongue may run great descants upon such things as these. The Child of God is satisfied with none of these things; he went to his Father's house, that he might see his Father's face; if he can find no evidence of that, his Soul is discontented and unsatisfied; he cries, I have laboured in vain, I have lost another day of grace, and opportunity of salvation; I have *been seeking the Lord in vain*, and waiting upon him for nothing. And this is the very reason why a pious Soul cannot hear every body, nor take up with all Sermons or discourses; he doth not go to Church to hear the voice of a man, but the Word of God, and goeth with an expectation to meet with a blessing from God; and therefore he will hear where the Word of God is so opened, so applied, as he can expect God's blessing upon it. He cannot expect that God's blessing should go along with any to whom he hath said, *Psal.* 50. 16, 17. *What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that*

thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee? He will not therefore sit under the Ministry of one that is openly prophane and wicked, and of a scandalous life: Nor one that teacheth *other Doctrine*, than what is according to sound Doctrine and godliness, and the form of *sound words* delivered in the Word of God; or him that *giveth heed to Fables, and endless Genealogies, which minister Questions rather than godly Edifying which is in Faith*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. When he goes to an *Ordinance*, he goeth not to hear the *words* of men *puffed up*, but the words of God, and expecteth that God should meet him, and bless him; and therefore governs himself accordingly in hearing, so as he may probably meet with a blessing from God, which he cannot expect from one who so dischargeth his work, as he proclaimeth to all, that God never sent him, though he runs.

In the next place, this will give us another advantage to *try our state with reference to God's favour*; *An earnest desire after an inward spiritual communion with God in any Ordinance or Duty, and the dissatisfaction of a Soul without it, will very much argue a man or woman to be a Christian indeed*; whereas a bare going to an Ordinance, a bare fancy or desire to hear, or a meer *hearing*, will speak a man no more than a nominal titular Christian, and be an evidence, that the Soul resteth in a meer bodily labour and exercise, which profiteth nothing. This is a great point; the being in the Sanctuary, will satisfie an Hypocrite; nothing but the seeing *the power and glory of God in the Sanctuary*, will satisfie *David* the man according to God's own heart. But it is hard for us to keep a *medium* in any thing almost. As in the heart of a Formalist, there is nothing of this desire, nothing of this dissatisfaction; so many times in the heart of a good Christian, there may be too much of this *dissatisfaction*, and a discontent and dissatisfaction founded in some mistake; let me therefore a little enlarge upon this so useful a Subject.

1. *A satisfaction with a bare reading or hearing the Word, speaks nothing above formality*, nothing above what an Hypocrite may arrive at. It is said, that *Herod* heard *John Baptist* gladly, yet he was not got up to the Hypocrite's Form. There was a people in *Ezekiel*'s time, of whom God complained, *Ezek* 33. *v.* 30, 31, 32. that talked against the Prophet, *by the walls, and in the doors of their houses, yet spake every one to his Brother, saying, Come I pray you and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord.* And came as the people came, and sate before the Prophet as the Lord's people, *and heard*

heard his words, but would not do them; with their mouths they shewed much love, but their hearts went after their covetousness. And *v.* 32. the Prophet was to them as *a very lovely Song, of one that had a pleasant voice, and could play well on an Instrument; they heard his words, but they did not do them.* And in the time of the Prophet *Isaiah,* there was a *generation that sought the Lord daily, and delighted to know the Lord's waies, as a Nation that forsook not the Ordinances of God---and took delight in approaching to God,* Isa. 58. 2. yet the Lord sent his Prophet, *to cry aloud against them, not to spare to lift up his voice like a Trumpet, to shew them their transgressions, and the house of* Jacob *their sins:* And doubtless there is such a generation still, as a generation of prophane persons, that despise the Word and Ordinances of God, and blaspheme God, and his Word; so another generation, that must read, and must go and hear, and may take some delight in it: They may delight in the stile, and phrase, and wit of the Preacher, or in the Learning that is mixed up with the discourse; or in the *Notion* of the Sermon, and desire to hear, especially (some kind of Preachers) upon these accounts; or to furnish their minds with some notional knowledge of the things of God, that may serve them as to their credit and reputation in the world; or furnish their tongues with discourse in religious company; all this will speak nothing to prove a man a Christian indeed; one whose heart is changed and transformed into the likeness of the Word. All this may be without any desire after the *kisses of Christ's mouth,* but a desire after the feeling the power of the Word upon our hearts, and a dissatisfaction of spirit, until a man findeth something of this upon his Soul, this will speak a man or woman not to rest in a form of godliness without the power of it; yet even this dissatisfaction may be too much, and this happeneth, when it proceedeth from some mistake and misapprehension of Religious Souls. This principally happeneth in two cases.

1. *The Soul's judging it self from its sensible experiences,* not *from its direct motions toward God and its desires.* The motions of our Souls towards God, must be warily distinguished from the *sensible returns* of God upon our Soul. The first will speak the *Soul beloved:* The latter speaks it *highly favoured,* κεχαριτωμενη, much graced by God. A pious Soul is not to judge it self so much from *God's returns* to it in this particular, as from God's workings in it, kindling in it those holy desires which move it after what it may be it doth not yet seem meet to the wisdom of God, that it should attain. I have not told

told you that the Spouse of Christ doth at all times find, that Christ hath kissed it *with the kisses of his mouth*; but that such a Soul's desires will be steady and constant *after such a thing*, and will not be satisfied with a meer bodily labour, and external performance of a duty.

2. The 2d mistake may be, from the Soul's not considering *the variety of those kisses by which our blessed Lord may kiss the Souls of Believers in and by the Word*, but keeping its Eye upon some *particular influence of grace* which it passionately desireth; and not finding that God satisfieth it as to that, it concludeth, it hath had no influence from God at all: As now, supposing a Soul sad and troubled, it is exceedingly desirous of comfort and satisfaction, and saith, *Lord, when wilt thou comfort me?* In expectation of meeting God in this way, it goeth out to hear the Word, and not meeting with that peace and comfort which it wanted, it is ready to conclude, that it hath met with nothing, and hath had no near, inward, spiritual communion with God. As to this, the Soul must rectifie its mistake; the profit of the Word is not limited to one thing; *it is* (saith the Apostle) *profitable for reproof, and correction, and instruction in righteousness.*

There is a *kiss of instruction in righteousness.* It may be thou canst not find that God by the Word which thou hast heard, hath spoken, or sealed peace to thy Soul, but thou art still full of troubles, and fears, doubts and dejections; well, but if thou findest that God hath more sealed and confirmed some Truth to thee, that he hath made thee to see further into the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, to see some Truths of concernment to thy Soul in a clearer and fuller light; do not say that thou hast not met with God in the Ordinance. The *opening of the Eyes*, especially to discern the Mysteries of the Gospel, is one of the kisses of Christ's mouth. If thy love be not (so far as thou canst see) further influenced; yet if thy Faith be promoved, this is a great thing. It may be thou camest to hear, hoping for strength against the temptation; God possibly hath met thee, and hath given thee a further light to discern the *temptation*, the *methods*, and *depth* of *Satan's subtilties* in it; this is a kiss.

There is an *instruction in Duty* (as well as *Doctrine*) which deserveth this name. Thou comest to the Word, hoping God will *speak peace to thee*, and take the thorn out of thy flesh that buffeteth thee. It seems not good to God to do this; but thou goest home from hearing, more submitting to the Will of God, more resolved

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to wait upon God, more convinced that it is thy duty to lie at the foot of God, and to wait his will and good pleasure. This also is a *kiss of his mouth.*

There is a kiss of *Reproof and Correction.* When God by his Word *reproves and corrects a Soul*; when he reproves the Soul, and the Soul is reproved (as is said of *Abraham*, when the *Pagan* King reproved him) this is a *kiss of his mouth*: Reproof and correction are things, for which God hath told us, that his Word is profitable for, and a Soul ought to look upon it self as having had a communion with God in his Word, when a *wise reproof hath met with an obedient Ear.* In short, if a Soul after hearing, though it hath not the desired mercy, yet findeth it self more *prepared to want it*, more quieted in the present want of it, more patient under the afflicting hand of God, that the grace of God is more sufficient for it than it was; this is an excellent kiss of Christ's mouth, a certain token that God in the Word communicated himself to the Soul (though it may be) it hath not been just in that way and method, and particular dispensation that the Soul expected.

I shall finish my Discourse upon this Proposition with a Word of Exhortation.

If this be the frame of one that is the *Spouse of Christ, let us labour to find our hearts in this frame.* I remember the words of *Absolom*; *What* (saith he) *do I at* Hierusalem, *if I may not see the King's face? Hierusalem* is called the City of *Solemnities*, thither *the Tribes went up, the Tribes to the Testimony of* Israel. *Hierusalem* was as pleasant a place as any was at that time in the world, and *Absolom* being the King's Son, had undoubtedly accommodations, as good as the City could afford: But *Absolom* had displeased his Father, and was sensible he was under his frown; and it was not for the pleasantness of the City, that he desired a liberty to return, but that he might see the reconciled face of his Father; and therefore he saith, *What should I do at* Hierusalem, *if I may not see the King's face?* Without that, *Hierusalem* was to him but as another place; nay in this worse than another place, because it was a place where others enjoyed that which he wanted. Every Courtier, every ordinary Servant of *David's* Family, saw his face; *Absolom* might not: I do only allude to it. In or near *Hierusalem* was Mount *Zion*, called the *Mountain of the House of the Lord*, because the Temple stood nigh to it. It was prophesied, *Isa.* 2. 2. *That in the last dayes the Mountain of the Lord's House should be established in the top of the Moun-*

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Mountains, and should be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations should flow unto it. And many people should go, and say, Come you, and let us goup to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob, *and he shall teach us of his waies, and we will walk in his paths.* 'Tis not the going up to the Mountain that pleaseth a gracious Soul, unless it finds it self, when there, taught something of God's waies, and inabled to walk in the *Lord's paths.* I shall press this Exhortation by some Arguments, and offer you something of Advice in this case.

First, For Arguments, what I gave you for *Reasons* may serve. *Thus you shall shew your selves to be Christians indeed.* The Wife must see the face of an Husband, though a little Child may be pleased with the Picture. Take an Ordinance, of it self it hath something of the impression of God upon it: God is there as a man in a Picture; but this can never satisfie a truly thirsty Soul after God; he thirsts after God himself; *My Soul* (saith *David*) *thirsteth for thee. David* must see *the power and glory of God in the Sanctuary.* An Hypocrite may have a fancy to go to Ordinances, to *hear Sermons*, &c. that's common to persons that shall perish with such as shall be saved: There may be many ends which Hypocrites may have, which that may serve well enough: But herein as to this point stands a good Christian distinguished from all Hypocrites and Formalists in the world as to this particular.

Secondly, *Till your hearts be brought to this, Duties will be nothing else but a continual task and a burden to your souls.* There will be no great pleasure arising to any Soul from a bare *reading* or *hearing* the Word of the Lord. The Formalists among the Jews, that lookt at nothing but the bodily labour, quickly came to prophane the Table of the Lord, and to account the meat there *contemptible*, and to say, *Behold what a wearines is it! Mal.* 1. 13. *Amos* tell us, *chap.* 8. 5. that they said, *When will the New Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth Wheat.* Nothing will deliver the Soul from the burden of religious duties, I mean, the looking upon them as such, but some *Sweetnes* discerned in them, or some *Profit*, which it discerneth arising from them, neither of which will be discerned by any Soul, which tasteth nothing of God in them, nor hath any Communion with him by, and through them; but these things I before touched upon, as also the danger of a meer bodily labour in this religious Duty; I shall therefore rather spend the Remainder of my time in directing you what to do, that

you

you may not only hear the words of Christs Mouth, but be kissed with the Kisses of his Mouth.

Go out to hear the word of God as the word of God. The Apostle blesseth God on the behalf of his *Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 2. 13. *That when they received the word of God,— they received it not as the word of men*, but (as it was in truth) *the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe.* I am afraid this is one thing which is much wanting in many Preachers, & more hearers; the former do not go out to preach the word, *as the word of God:* The other do not go out to hear it under that notion, *as the word of God.* It is a Phrase hath a great deal in it, and is comprehensive of all that previous preparation which is our duty with reference to an Institution of God, and that to so great an End as the Salvation of the Soul is. If I remember right, *Plutarch* doth somwhere complain of the Heathen, that they went to the Temples of the Gods ὡς ἐς τόπον μόνον, not as men do to a place, to which they set out upon design and due deliberation, considering whither they are going, and what their business was there; but as men who step in by the by into a place: Whereas he saith they should come οἴκοθεν παρεσκευάσθαι, prepared out of their Houses: What wonder is it if God should not meet them in his Ordinance, who come not out of any fixed design to meet him. Your Friend hardly thanks you for making his House your Inn, stepping out of your Road to see him, when your main design is at anothers Journeys end: But he thanks you that that is the main design of your Journey. 1.

1. *That man goeth to hear the word of God as the word of God, that aright fixeth his end before he goeth to hear.* Our Saviour seemeth to reflect upon the want of this in those that went to hear *John the Baptist.* Matth. 11. 7. *What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A Reed shaken with the wind: But what went ye out for to see? A man cloathed in soft Raiment: Behold they that wear soft Raiment are in Kings houses. But what went ye out for to see? A Prophet: yea, I say unto you, and more than a Prophet.* I would have every Man and Woman before he or she goes out to hear the word of God, say to himself, My Soul, whom am I going to hear? A man that shall speak to me smooth things, and deliver himself in words that are proper to express what he saith: But whom am I going to hear? One that hath a pleasant Voice, like one that singeth to, or playeth well upon an Instrument, such a one I may hear in the Schools of Rhetorick and Oratory: But whom do I go out for to hear? One

that can diſcourſe rationally upon an Argument; I may hear ſuch a one in the Schools of *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*: Whom then do I go to Church for to hear? A *Prophet*: One that diſcourſeth of the things of God; yea, and *more than a Prophet:* I am going to hear God and Chriſt himſelf ſpeaking to me him, of whom God hath ſaid, *This is my well beloved Son, hear ye him.* For though it be a man that ſpeaketh, yet it is a man ſent of God, cloathed with the Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſpeaking to me his Words, and in his Name; nor am I to regard any thing I hear, but what agreeth with what he hath ſpoken, or his holy Prophets and Apoſtles, who were immediately inſpired by him. The ſetting right of a Perſons firſt end, deſign, and intention, gives a mighty conduct to his Actions. And (as I before ſa'd) it is very unreaſonable to expect Gods preſence, and Bleſſing with, and upon us, where the Heart is not ſet right with reference to its Intention and Deſign. It is true as to the firſt Grace, God is found of thoſe that ſeek him not, and of thoſe who do not enquire after him. No Soul would ever be converted, and brought home to God, if God did not meet it in his Word, before it had thus rightly fixed its deſign and intention in coming to hear the word of God, but what God may do and ſometimes doth out of his abounding and preventing Grace, is one thing, what a Soul may expect from God upon the account of any promiſe is another thing, the Archer may poſſibly hit the mark, though he hath never by his Eye levelled his Arrow at it, but he cannot promiſe himſelf that good hap. No Soul that ſetteth not his heart aright to ſeek God in any Ordinance, particularly this of hearing his word, who doth not before he go, ſet his Face towards *Jeruſalem*, ſet this as a mark in his Eye, as the thing which he propoſeth to himſelf.

2. Secondly, It doth not only comprehend the end of *Intention* and *Deſign*, but alſo the *manner*, and certainly none can pretend to hear the word *as the word of God*, but he muſt go to it without any levity, and with all manner of *Serioufneſs, and compoſure of Spirit*. No Reverence, and Submiſſion of Spirit can be imagined too much for the great Majeſty of Heaven. We ought not to go to hear the word as if we were going to hear an *Oration*, much leſs as if we were going to a Play.

3. Thirdly, We cannot be thought to hear it *as the word of God*, without ſome previous lookings up to God for a Bleſſing upon it. We go for the *Teachings of the Spirit*. Our Saviour tells us, *Luk.* 11. 14. *He gives his holy Spirit to them that ask him.* Chriſt firſt begg'd

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the Spirit for us, *John* 14.16. *I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter.* That *comforting Spirit* is the *Teaching Spirit*, v. 26. *The Comforter which the Father shall send in my Name shall teach you all things.* As Christ at first prayed to the Father to send the Comforter, the Spirit that should teach us all things: So he expecteth that we should pray for him for our selves. The holy Spirit is given to those that ask him; this is a piece of our Houshold Preparation.

Attend particularly to those Impulses which at some times thou mayest have to hear. A Christian shall sometimes find some particular *impulses* upon him to hear. I would not be here mistaken, I know there is a dangerous Opinion imbibed, and promoved by some *Enthusiasts*, that Christians should never go to perform a Duty, whether praying or hearing, but upon some *particular Impulse* or *Motion*. I call this a dangerous Principle, because it is the first step to casting off all Duties and Ordinances. But yet let no Christian neglect such special *Impulses*. Impulses to Actions that are contrary to our Duty in the revealed Will of God, ought to be rejected, contemned, and abhorred; they must come from the boilings of corruption in our own hearts, or from the evil Spirit. Impulses to Actions which are not expresly commanded, nor yet forbidden, must be considered, and we ought to obey or not obey them, as Circumstances, *pro hic & nunc*, at this or that time, may determine it lawful or not lawful, expedient or not expedient, with Reference to the General rules which God in his word hath given us to guide all our Actions by. *Impulses* to the Performance of our Duty under due Circumstances ought never to be neglected. It may be well presumed, that God hath something to say to the Soul in particular at such a time, when he gives it a special *item* and *monition* to go to hear. 2.

Thirdly, be sure thou goest to hear *with an humble Heart*, and with as much of a *poor*, *broken*, and *contrite Spirit as thou canst*. There is a Promise, *Psal.* 25.9. *The humble he will teach*, and another *Isa.* 57. *v.* 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, and whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones.* And *Isa.* 66. *v.* 2. *To the man will I look even to him that is of a poor, and contrite Spirit, and that trembleth at my word.* God sendeth the *proud Soul empty away*; take heed of going to hear with a proud Heart, self-opinionated as to Knowledge, or self-conceited. God teacheth the humble, dwelleth with the humble, looketh upon the hum-

ble. The Rain that dasheth off, and runneth down the Mountains, resteth in the Valleys; the Instructions, Reproofs, Convictions of the word which fall upon Men of proud and high Conceits and Opinions of themselves, rest, and are drunk in by low, and humble Souls. The *broken* and *contrite Heart* is like the plowed ground, which is in itself more apt to receive, and drink in the word, than that ground where the surface is not at all broken, but there is besides particular Promises made to *Broken Hearts*. The word you know is compared to *Seed* in the Parable of the Sower, *Matth.* 13. and in several other Texts, the Husbandman useth not to sow his Seed in the whole, but in the broken ground.

Fourthly, *Be sure you go to hear with unprejudised Hearts, willing and desirous to learn.* Prejudice naturally barreth the Ear to Instruction: *Ahab*'s prejudice against *Micajah* stopt his Ears against the word of the Lord to him, and proved his fatal Ruine and Destruction. I should never advise Christians to sit under the Ministry of any person they are prejudised against, it much contributeth to a prejudice against the word of the Lord spoken by them; if therefore in that case I could not remove my Prejudice, I would chuse another Preacher; but I further added, that *you should go with Hearts willing and desirous to know the Will of God:* It is the chapt, thirsty ground that most drinks in the Rain, and is made most fruitful by it; it is the Soul that hungers, and thirsteth after the word that profiteth by it, and hath a communion with God in it; though the Word be Gods, and he breatheth upon the Soul according to his own good pleasure, yet he breatheth upon, he teacheth no Souls but those Souls that are willing, and desirous to learn and to be instructed. It is true, it is he who first maketh them willing, who first enclineth their Ears to hear; but he first *prepareth the Heart*, and then *causeth his Ear to hear*, as to Prayer; so in hearing, he first *circumciseth the Ear* of a man, and enclineth him to hear his Statutes, and then he teacheth them: He dealeth not with us as with Stocks, and Stones, but as with rational Creatures in a rational way.

5. *Attend unto the word which thou goest to hear.* No teaching, no good is to be expected from any teaching, where the person only lends an Ear, but suffers his Mind extravagantly to wander here and there. The Schoolmaster hath no Patience for such a Scho'ar, I am sure God hath no Blessing for such a Soul as in hearing doth not hear, nor encline his Ear to Understanding. The Scholar gets little by his Master or Tutors reading upon an Author, if the Scholar attendeth

tendeth not to the Text of the Author. The Spirits teaching is but a Commentary upon the word, it bringeth to remembrance the things which we have heard from God. The Soul that attends not to the word which he reads, or heareth, can expect nothing of the Spirits teaching; the word is not like to dwell in that Soul, that will not suffer it to come so much as over the Threshold into it, I mean into its *memory* or *notion.*

Take heed of *Vexing the Spirit in its Teachings.* It was laid to the charge of the Israelites, *Isa.* 53. 10. that *they vexed his holy Spirit.* They vexed the Spirit by an afterwork, rebelling against his word, not being obedient to what they were taught. But men may in hearing *vex the Spirit* in its Teaching, either by Non-Attendency, suffering their hearts to be wandring elsewhere, when God in his word is teaching the Soul; this vexeth any Father, or Master in teaching a Child; but of this I spake before. And not only so, but *by not giving a special regard to its special Instructions:* Scarce any of us but in hearing shall find some notions of truth, some particular passages that God sets more particularly home, and do in a special manner affect the Soul. The not observing them, or quick forgetting of them is a special vexing of the holy Spirit in its Teachings of our Souls. 6.

Work together with the Spirit, in calling to remembrance what you have heard. Talk of the Law of the Lord when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, when thou sittest by the walls of thy House, when thou goest out, and when thou comest in. The Jews had *Phylacteries.* Rolls of the Law fastened to their Garments, to keep the Law in their mind perpetually. Our Saviour blamed them for their broad *Phylacteries* and narrow Practice; but he blamed not the means to keep the Law of God in their minds, only they used them to a wrong and false end, & used them not to the end for which they made them.

Follow the word with Prayer. Do not only pray for the Spirit before thou hearest, but pray for the abidings of it after thou hast heard, to bring to thy remembrance what thou hast heard from God. 8.

Labour to practise what thou hearest. The Master or Tutor is weary of teaching the Scholar, to whom he hath read Lecture after Lecture, but yet he will do nothing; but on the contrary, how chearfully doth an ingenuous Master teach that Scholar, that to his utmost putteth in practice what he hath read to him, and then comeths to his Tutor begging to be further taught and instructed. The Spirit of God will give over that Soul, that pretends to be ever learning, and yet never comes to any practical Knowledge of the Truth. 9.

Truth. *He that is not a meer hearer, but a doer of the Word also*, is the man that shall be blessed indeed.

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Sermon VIII.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for his Loves are better than Wine.

I Have done now with the matter of the Spouses (that is the Churches, or the particular believing Souls) prayer in this her first Petition; I have nothing (as to the petition it self) to consider but the *form* of it. As to the matter we have found, that the thing she would have, is *Some Special, distinguishing favour.* Some token of God for good to her which might speak him to love her with the Love of a bridegroom to a bride, a Husband to his Wife.

I have shewed you, that she asketh *modestly* but a kiss, thereby letting us know how precious the least of Christs Special, distinguishing love is to the truly believing Soul. Not that the least dispensations, and measures of grace, will satisfy the Spiritual *hunger* and thirst of a *pious Soul*; it is one thing for a pious Soul to prize, and value the least, another thing to be satisfied, and fully contented with it, she therefore mentions *Kisses* in the *Plural Number*, as well to signifie the variety of gracious Influences, as their frequent Emanations. I have further taken notice of her particular desire after a communion with God in his word, especially Gospel Doctrines, and that not only a more external Communion with, God in reading, hearing and thinking upon it: But the more *reall internal Spiritual* communion with God in his word which the Soul hath by the *teachings of the Spirit*, She desires not onely to hear the words of his mouth, but to be kissed *with the kisses of his mouth.* I have now nothing to do but to consider the form of her words, and see if from thence we can gain any further Spiritual Instruction.

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The words are first *Vox volentis*, the Language of a Soul, that was willing to receive these impressions; if she were not willing, she would not have made them the matter of her request.

Secondly, They are *Vox cupientis*, not onely the Language of one that was *willing* but of one inflamed with a desire after the object *willed* and *proposed*. They do not express a bare *velleity* with an *indifferency* as to the thing. They sound a great deal more then. *He may, if he will*, kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

Lastly, They are *Vox petentis*, the language of one upon her knees, begging it of God, as the great thing which she sought after. And as I observed to you in the opening of the words, she begs *reverently, modestly, humbly, boldly, fervently*: The form of her Petition speaketh a well ordered *Prayer*, a Prayer according to the Rules which God hath given us for putting up our Supplications. Hence results the Proposition.

Prop. *That believing Souls are not only very willing, but exceedingly desirous of a near, spiritual communion with Christ, and to obtain it will use rightly ordered Prayer.*

In the Proposition here are three things predicated of such a Soul as is the *Spouse* to this glorious Bridegroom.

1. Its *willingness* that the Lord should have a *near and spiritual communion with it.*

2. *It is not only willing but desirous of it.*

3. *That in order to it, it will make use of rightly ordered Prayer.*

I have already told you in my former Discourses, That *Communion* (strictly taken) signifies some actions wherein two or more mutually impart, or communicate themselves each to other. Now of this you know amongst men there are various degrees. We have some communion with strangers, more with our neighbours, friends and acquaintance; most of all with our neerest Relations; the Father with his Child, the Husband with the Wife; of all other the communion betwixt the Husband and Wife, is the neerest. The Husband communicates his heart, his love and affection, more to his Wife, than to any other person: So doth the Wife reciprocally to her Husband; so that of all other, the Conjugal Communion is the neerest; such is that mentioned in the Text. God communicates himself to all his creatures in some degree or other; he *feedeth the young Ravens when they cry; he maketh his Sun to shine upon the just*

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and upon the unjust: And they in some degree *communicate* themselves to him as their *Creator*: The *young Ravens cry*; the *wicked man howls upon his Bed*; the vilest man in distress cryes, *Lord help me*. This is like the Communion now that we may have with Strangers, yea Enemies. God doth further communicate himself to those within the pale of his Church. To the Church belongs the *Oracles of God*; God further reveals his mind and will to such as are within the bosom of it; They also do communicate themselves unto God more than the others, that is, they pay him a further homage; they give him a more steady, constant, bodily service; they *read, hear, pray*, &c. This is like our communion with neighbours and ordinary friends. But now God doth further communicate himself unto some persons: He communicates his *grace and power* to their wills and affections; they are thereby made partakers of the Divine Nature, transformed into the Image of God, and they reciprocally having received this Divine grace, give up their hearts unto God; this is that which I mean by near, conjugal communion, being like the communion which the Husband and Wife have each with other, of all other the fullest and neerest. I say,

1. First, *The believing Soul is willing that God should have such a communion with it.* It is *passively willing*, not unwilling: Indeed every regenerate Soul is further willing than this comes to; but that I shall shew you by and by under another Head. This alone will distinguish such a Soul, from the Soul of an Hypocrite. Take an unregenerate man, he is not willing to this; he may be willing that God should impart himself to him in outward blessings, which may gratifie his sense, and serve him as to his renewing necessities in the world; or that God should impart to him some *spiritual gifts*; these may serve him as to his profit, or as to his honour, credit and reputation in the world; & he may be willing to communicate and impart something of himself to God (as I have before shewed you) but that God should *unite their hearts to fear his Name*, (which was the prayer of *David*) that God should cleanse them from their corruptions, incline their hearts to his Testimonies; this they are not willing to. They are like some woman, that will say of such a person as makes love to her, she likes the man well enough to sit and talk with her; but for an Husband she cannot abide him. Thus the best unregenerate man dealeth with God. Some there are, prophane persons, that cannot endure the Name of God, or Christ; hate his Word, and all acts of communion with God, or any thing that relateth to him; but now

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the formal Hypocrite, he can be content to go and ſit and hear a Sermon, and read a Chapter, wherein he hears God ſpeaking to him; yea and to pray ſometimes, by which duty he talks with God; but he abhorreth that God ſhould come near to his Soul, to captivate his underſtanding, to ſubdue his will, to direct his affections to truly ſpiritual Objects, he withdraweth his heart and affections from God. I think *Auguſtine* ſomewhere confeſſeth, that in his unregenerate ſtate, he often prayed to God that he would give him ſtrength againſt a particular corruption, when in the mean time he in his heart wiſhed that God would not hear his prayer. The unregenerate man is not willing that God ſhould have any near communion with him: He is not willing that the Law of God ſhould be wrote upon his heart, nor that the Lord ſhould rule over his inward man.

Secondly, The Regenerate Soul is not only *willing*, but *deſirous*: The willingneſs that is in him, is not a bare, *lazy velleity*, and a paſſive willingneſs, but an *active willingneſs*; he being made willing, his will commands his affections to move towards that which his will hath choſen; and indeed there is no true *willing* of any thing without this; for good being the proper Object of the rational appetite, no ſooner hath the underſtanding diſcerned it, but the will chuſeth it, and naturally moveth by deſires towards it.

Thirdly, I obſerved to you, that the words are in the *form of a Prayer*. What the *Will* hath choſen as good and ſuitable to a man's neceſſities, and upon that account hath by deſires moved towards, it commandeth the aſſiſtance of the outward man in the uſe of any proper mean to obtain. Prayer being an Ordinance and appointment of God, as a means in order to the obtaining any good thing which he hath promiſed; it is but a reaſonable motion of a reaſonable Soul. I put in the term *rightly ordered*, becauſe, as I ſhall ſhew you further anon, there is a ſufficient ground for it, in this form of words by which the Spouſe's Petition is expreſſed; and it is not every Prayer that is acceptable to God, but ſuch alone as he hath directed. God hath not only directed our duty as to the matter, but alſo as to the manner of the performance. But this is enough to have ſpoken, to give you the ſenſe of the Propoſition. I ſhall ſhew you now the ground or reaſon of it, whence in this thing there is ſuch a different temper and complexion betwixt the regenerate and the unregenerate Soul. The foundation of this lies *in the change of the heart, which is wrought in the Child of God*, which ſuppoſed theſe motions of his

Soul, will appear to be no more than the regular motions of reasonable Souls so complexionated. The Scripture every where describeth the Child of God as a *New Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and all things are become new.* Ephes. 4. 23. *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Col. 3. 10. And have *put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.* The Child of God is *transformed by the renewing of his mind.* Rom. 12. 2. *Regenerated and born again.* Joh. 3. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*; born again of *Water, and of the Spirit*, as our Saviour expoundeth it, *v.* 5. Now this *change*, this *renovation* respecteth not the *substantial* power and faculties of the Soul. The same powers and faculties, the same *understanding*, *will* and *affections*; I mean the same powers which we call so remain, but they are changed as to their *quality* and aspect unto Objects. The same wheels of the Soul remain, but they are set right, and move more regularly towards what are indeed their true and proper Objects. The natural man's understanding is *blind*, and *dark*, and *weak*, and *impotent*; he calleth *good, evil*, and *evil, good*, *bitter things sweet*, and *sweet things bitter*; his pallate is vitiated, so as he neither doth, nor can discern things truly and spiritually good. Until his nature be cultivated by *moral Discipline*, and some *ingenious Education*, he is like the Beast that perisheth, and judgeth of *good* and *evil* meerly by *sense*. When it is *cultivated* he judgeth of it by *reason*, and determines good and evil according to rational Principles, and in that riseth no higher, than to the perfection of an Heathen Philosopher, who knew nothing of any such thing as *Union and Communion with God*, and either believed nothing of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and so took not himself concerned to care for that, or at least had a faint belief, and an imperfect notion of it. But the *renewed man* hath his *understanding opened*, to discern *more excellent things*. He easily seeth, That *God is the chiefest Good*, and thence concludes as rationally, that the happiness of man must needs consist in the enjoyment of God, in Union and Communion with him; as the Heathens determined, that the happiness of a man must necessarily lye in the *fruition* of, and an union with the *summum bonum*, the greatest good. This being determined by the *understanding*, by that new light and power of discerning, given it by God: The will, of whose nature

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it is to follow the Dictates of the Understanding, ordinarily chuseth and embraceth it, by as natural and rational a working as that wretched Soul that knoweth no better things than good Meat, and Drink, and Cloaths, and Estates, chooseth them, and embraceth them before other things: Or the more *cultivated* Soul chooseth Learning, and Knowledge, and moral Habits. Only in regard there is a particular Debauchery and Corruption of the Will of man, there is a particular work of God upon the Will, changing and altering that, or else in Spiritual things it would not follow the Dictate of the Understanding, and this may be seen in things beneath this Order. We indeed usually say, the *Will is a blind faculty, and follows the dictate of the Understanding*; but since the Fall, man is so much mancipated and enslaved to his sensual Appetite, that we see in daily experience it doth not. The drunkard, the unclean persons are daily proofs of it, who know well enough that the prosecution of their Lusts in those things doth not only destroy their contrary moral Habits, but ruine their Lives, Health, Reputation, yet cannot forbear the pursuit of them. But the Will being thus renewed to chuse the best, spiritual good, the affections move in a natural Order after it, and the outward man is commanded to all actions pursuant to it. So that I say, this Renovation of the whole Man according to the Image of God is the true cause of the Souls willingness, and earnest desire after these nearest degrees of Communion with God: The understanding being thus fully enlightened, to discern that God is the chiefest good, and that mans greatest happiness must lie in an Union with him, and enjoyment of him.

2. To which I know nothing can be added, but *those measures of experience which every renewed Soul hath how good the Lord is.* The experience of any good adds much to our Souls value of it, as it confirmeth to us our notion and apprehension of it. Many things appear better to us in contemplation, than in fruition: But there can be nothing in nature conceived, more effectual to inflame our affections after any Object, than when besides the goodness our Understandings have discerned in it, upon which our Wills have made their Election of it, a superadded experience confirmeth our notion of the goodness of it. There is no justified Soul but hath in some measure tasted how good the Lord is, and how good a Fellowship, and Communion with God is, so as it doth but move rationally, in willing and desiring the nearest and most intimate degrees of it.

I added further: That this Soul as a mean to obtain it, will use

rightly ordered Prayer. The Reason and ground of this evidently appears, if we consider;

1. *That Prayer is the means to obtain it.* No man can be so much as presumed truly to will, and to desire any thing which he useth no means to obtain, or as to which he doth not use the proper means to obtain it, if he knows it, the good is here is not sensible, or rational, to be acquired by *natural* or *moral means*, but is truly and highly spiritual; the Communication of the Divine Influences to the Soul, and most inward part of man; the means must be something of Divine Institution, something which God hath appointed as a mean in order to so great and blessed an end. Prayer is one mean of this Nature. He gives his *holy Spirit to them that ask him*, saith our Saviour. This is a Divine Means, under a Divine Ordination, and Institution, with reference to such an end. This the Believer knoweth, and it is a means within his Power. God hath sent forth the *Spirit of Adoption into his Heart*, teaching him to cry *Abba Father.* The Spirit helpeth *his Infirmities* with *strong cries*, and *groans* which cannot be uttered.

2. He also knoweth, that it is not *all Prayer* will be *effective of this*, but *Prayer according to the Will of God, effectual fervent Prayer.* A man may *ask amiss*, and *not receive.* Though therefore an Hypocrite that takes up with a form of Godliness, and aims at no right end in his acts of Homage, but drives a by Design for himself in all his duties, and seeketh himself more than God, may content himself with such performances as answer the low mark which he levells his Arrows at: Yet the pious Soul that hath a true aim, and design in his Actions, must mind such a performance of them as shall bear a proportion to the true end he aimeth at; but this is enough to have spoken for the Explication and Confirmation of this Proposition; what this rightly ordered Prayer is, (God willing) I shall further open to you in the Application of this Discourse.

Use 1. From hence in the first place we may take some measures of our State with reference unto God. None of these things can truly be said of a wicked man, or formal Hypocrite.

1. It cannot be said that he is truly willing to have such a Communion with God and Christ, as I have been opening and describing to you. They would not have God rule over them; they would have a Christ to save them from the Wrath to come; but they would not have Christ to dwell in their Hearts, to subdue their Lusts, no Hypocrite can truly say this. They have no desires after such a Commu-

Communion with Christ. Their desires are all terminated in themselves. *They say to the Almighty depart from us, we desire not the knowledg of thy ways.* If at any time they pray for any thing of this nature, it is coldly, and lazily, and formally, secretly wishing they might have no Answer to their Prayers. Indeed a true willingness, an hearty desire, and fervent Prayer after this spiritual, inward, near Communion with God, may I think be trusted to, as a mark of one who is a Christian indeed. It must argue a mighty change in the Heart of man, and such a one as no moral Principles, no change upon the meer cultivation of Nature, can be imagined to effect. Here is clearly a good pursued, which no natural man discerneth, no natural Understanding judgeth, the Eyes of the Understanding must first be opened. Here must be an alteration of the Will of man, the natural bent and inclination of it must be changed. This change cannot be from our selves, nor from any Creature, but from him alone who giveth to *will*, and to *do*.

Secondly, You may hence observe, that it is not a meer willing a near Communion with Christ that will evidence a truth of Grace. It must be a *willingness* declared by *Intense desires*, and attended with *Suitable endeavours*. It is easy for men to say they are willing Christ should Reign over them, and do his will in and upon their Souls when they are really *unwilling*. Yea, there may be a real faint velleity, but attended with a carelesness as to the obtaining what we pretend to will. All Grace, habitual Grace is expresst under the notion of *willing*, God is said to give, *To will* and to *do*: To make his people a *willing people in the day of his power*. There are promises made, to those who are *Willing*, and *obedient*. And If a *man will, let him come and drink of the water of life freely*, and *Paul* saith no more than *To will is present with me*. But these Scriptures must not be understood of a meerly pretended, and professed willingness, nor a faint willingness, issued in a few Short breathed wishes, but of a true and *real willingness* discovering it self in the intense motions of the *Affections*, and the intense pursuit of the thing, willed, by the whole man. Such a willingness Speaketh a change in the heart and where it is present with the Soul is accepted. 2d Br.

But let us upon this occasion enter into our hearts, and try our Spiritual State upon this issue, *viz. Whether we be truly willing and desirous* to have this near, inward, conjugal Communion with this glorious Bridegroom. To prove this, the Apostle hath expressed the Union between Christ and the Soul, made by faith in the Justification Use 2.

tion of a Soul, by the moral Union which in Marriage is betwixt the Husband and Wife, *Eph.* 5. from *v.* 25. to the End. We shall also find that state excellently shadowing out the *Communion* which should be, and is betwixt every Soul and Christ; I mean every believing Soul.

1. *The Husband and Wife are made one flesh.* Not *essentially*, but *morally* this was a piece of the Law of Marriage upon its first Institution *Gen.* 2. 24. Sutably to this the Apostle Speaks. 1 *Cor.* 6. 26. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit.* Believers are by *Peter* said to be made *partakers of the Divine Nature.* Where there is this true Communion between Christ and the Soul, there is in his measure the *same mind* in him that was in *Jesus Christ.* He in the general willeth the same things that Christ willeth. The Glory of God, the Sanctification and eternal Salvation of his own Soul, and the Souls of others, he can as to the main say, *Fiat voluntas mea; mea quia tua.* Let my will be done, mine because thine. If he doth in any thing err, and not will what Christ willeth, it is through ignorance, passion or infirmity, when he seeth his error, his will altereth; hence in our prayers, in things as to which we are not sure that it is the will of God we should have them, every true Christian, though he may ask for them, prayeth after his *Lord's copy, nevertheless not my will but thy will be done.* Canst thou say this? That the same Spirit is in thee that was in Christ, that in the general, in the main thou willest nothing but what Christ willeth, that thou art one Spirit with Christ?

Secondly all *Conjugal Communion requires forsaking of Father and mother,* *Gen.* 2. 24. A forsaking them to that degree, as to dwell with the Husband, so as to adhere to the Husband, or Wife in case of an opposition, this is also the Law of this Spiritual Marriage *Psal.* 145. 10. *Hearken O Daughter and consider, and encline thine Ear. Forget also thine own people, and thy Fathers House,* The Wife that will maintain duly her Conjugal Communion must: 1. *Not dwell in her Fathers house if he may not be with her there.* 2. *She must forsake the Precepts, Counsels and Advice of her dearest relations, where it is contrary to the will of her Husband.* She must 3. *Forsake them in what they are Enemies and opposite to her Husband.* What are our own people? What is our Fathers House? But the world and men of it, the Counsels and Imaginations, and inclinations of our own hearts? A true Christian that is by Faith united to Christ is not obliged in order to his or her Communion with him, wholly to forsake

forsake the world, and cast off Earthly Friends converse or relations, he is onely bound *Not to dwell in the world* not to make that his whole business, but to have his heart in heaven, to use the world as if he used it not. Not to hearken to the Precepts, Counsels, and Advices of the world contrary to the will of Christ. Not to take the worlds part in opposition to the Law of Christ; thus much the Wives Conjugal Communion with her Husband, and the Souls Spiritual Conjugal Communion with Christ calls to it for, the preference of Christs will, both to its own natural Will, and to all the Wills of men.

Thirdly. Look as in Marriages, the *Communion* following that moral Union requires a *cleaving of the Married Persons each to other*, *Gen.* 2. 24. So the Communion that followeth this Mystical Union requireth this of every Christian, to cleave unto Christ, to his Truths, his Interests and Concerns in the World, his Friends, his Will, all that is his. This *cleaving* I understand not as restrained to the inward motions of the Affections, as it is said, *Sechem's* heart clave to *Dinah*: But I extend it further to all overt Acts, by which this inward Affection may be discovered, in the same sense as we say to our Friends, *I will stick to you*, or I will stand by you. Christ performs his part he sticks, he cleaves to the Believers, in all its Spiritual Combates, and Dangers with, or from, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil: Thus must we cleave to him.

Fourthly, 'Tis a piece of *Conjugal Communion. That the Wife does nothing but she will first acquaint her Husband with it, ask his Counsel, take his Direction.* The Husband also imparts much of his Counsel to his Wife: 'Tis a piece of our Communion, true Communion with Christ, to do nothing without taking Counsel of him in his Word, without asking his Directions in Prayer, in every difficulty where we have not a clear direction in the Word of God, to fly to him by Prayer and Supplications.

Are your Souls willing to entertain such a Communion with Christ as this is? Are you desirous of it? Do you pray for it? This speaketh well for the Union betwixt Christ and your Souls, nothing less than this will.

Use 3. This Discourse may be further useful to some Souls, that it may be cannot satisfie themselves in that Communion which they have with the Lord Jesus; they would willingly that Christ should impart more of his Loving-kindness, and of his Power to their Souls, and they are troubled, that they can no more freely, no more fully give

give up themselves to him; their Hearts are not united enough to love and fear God, and indeed the best Souls are seldom satisfied in the *Reception of Grace*, or in the *Actings of it*. Now such Souls as are overmuch troubled in this case, troubled to that degree as for want of degrees to suspect all the truth of Grace in their Souls. This may be some satisfaction to hear, that it speaks a Soul to be the Spouse of Christ to be truly willing, sincerely desirous, much in Prayer for those degrees of nearest Communion with Christ which it stands in need of. In Earthly Marriages three things are required, 1. *Consent of Parties.* 2. *Consent of Parents.* 3. *Publication of it to the World.* The first alone is essential to the Union. The second to make it a perfectly lawful Act. The third only to *avoid Scandal* and to keep up Civil Order in the World. In the Spiritual Marriage *the Consent of Parties makes the Union.* Christs Consent to be united to thy Soul, is evidenced in his Word declared by us, who are his *Proxies to espouse you to this Husband.* If thy Soul also truly consents, if thou truly desirest this Union, and that Communion which followeth and ought to follow it, the Match is made, thou art joined to the Lord, though it may be there be not a Publication of it to thy own Soul, much less to the World.

Use 4. I shall conclude with a Word of Exhortation, *To labour for this evidence of Grace.* That you may be truly willing to, truly desirous of such a Communion with Christ, as I have been describing. You that are yet strangers to it, labour for the beginnings of it. You that find any thing of it, labour to uphold it, and labour for the Perfection of it. To the first, by way of Counsel, I would only speak a few things.

1. *Labour to be convinced of your sad condition, till Grace hath brought you into this better State.* Christ told the Woman of *Samaria* she had had many Husbands, and he whom she then enjoyed was not her Husband. Unregenerate Men have many Paramours; for there is no Soul but cleaveth to somthing, one mans Heart cleaveth to his Pleasures, another to his Profits, but all these are not the reasonable Souls Husbands, the Soul cannot feed upon these things. Let a Woman be married to a Man, and run away from him she may have another Paramour, but he is not her Husband. It is Mans Case; he was in Creation united to God, he is run away from God, and followeth many Lovers, but none of these are the Souls Husbands. O therefore return to your first Husband, what can you imagine God should do for any of your Souls, more than any

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one of you would do for a Wife, that had run away from you, and clave to another man.

2. Look as the Woman that wanteth her Husband, hath none that so naturally careth for her, none that will be a covering to her Head, or a Light to her Eyes, so neither hath the Soul in its state of disunion with God, any that will care for it, as to its Spiritual and Eternal Concerns. I might add the infinite advantages of this Union and Communion; I remember the Argument used by *Hamor* and *Sechem*, to perswade their People into a Willingness to be circumcised, that *Sechem* might be married into *Jacob's* Family. *Shall not* (say they) *their Cattle, and Substance, and all that they have be ours*, only *consent* to them? *Shall not the Grace*, and *Glory*, and *Kingdom of Christ* be yours, only consent to him, and be willing to a Communion with him? But it is the Lord that must *perswade* Japhet *to come, and to dwell in the Tents of* Shem. *No man comes to the Son but he whom the Father draweth*; and while there is a Spiritual Union, it is unreasonable to think there should be any *Willingness* in a Soul to any near Communion with Christ. We may use Arguments with Souls estranged from God, to reconcile them to him, and it is our Duty so to do; till God concurreth with the work of his Spirit they will be of no force.

Let me therefore turn to such with whom this *mystical Union* is made. Nor shall I need use words with any such, to perswade them to a *consent* or *willingness* to, or desire of this near Communion with Christ which I have been discoursing; there is no such Soul but must be willing, must be desirous of it: But there is none of them which hath *attained*, there's no such Soul but hath attained something, nor any that hath attained to Perfection, none but may receive from Christ more than it hath received, none but desireth his Heart might be more in subjection to Christ than it is. The way further to attain is Prayer, rightly ordered Prayer. It is the Spouse that speaketh in the Text, she had attained, she was already united to her Spiritual Bridegroom; but yet she finds her Soul in a continuing need of his Influences, and further Tokens for good to be shewed unto her, for these she useth Prayer as an apposite means. Only we may ask and not receive, because we ask amiss. Let us look over the form of the Spouses Petition, and see what we may learn from thence to guide our Souls in our Applications to God.

First, The word in the *Hebrew* הָבִיאֵנִי in the future Tense, which is often used for the *Imperative Mood* in the *Hebrew*, and may indiffe-

rently be translated, *Let him kiss me*, or *He shall*, or *will kiss me* with the Kisses of his Mouth. *Her Prayer was the Prayer of Faith.* This is a prime requisite in all our Prayers to God. *Matth.* 21. 22. *And all things whatsoever you shall ask in Prayer believing, you shall receive.* Jam. 5. 15. *The Prayer of Faith saveth the sick.* He (saith the Apostle) *that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of those that seek him.* Nor is that General Faith enough for that Soul that goeth to God, for any particular Mercy, there must be a more particular Faith, both as to Gods *Power*, and *Love*, with reference to that good thing, that *God is able* to do that thing for him: yea and willing also so far as in his infinite Wisdom he shall see it good. When the blind men had come to Christ begging Mercy, *Matth.* 9. 27, 28. (saith he) *Believe you that I am able to do this?* They said, *Yea Lord*, then he *touched their Eyes.* Nay the *Prayer of Faith* signifieth more, a *trusting and relying on God for the doing* of the thing we ask. It is very much to observe how much the holy Scripture layeth upon this with Reference to the hearing and answering our Prayers. Jam. 1 5. *If any of you lack Wisdom let him ask of God: But* (v.6.) *let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering:* According to your Faith (saith Christ) so be it to you. The Unregenerate man cannot ask in Faith, he wants the Habit, his Soul is shut up in Unbelief, and Gods People may be too guilty of not asking in *Faith*, giving too much way to temptations, and hearkening too much to the jealousies and suspicions of their own Souls.

Secondly, The Spouses Phrase speaks an *holy boldness*. *He shall kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth.* Indeed this differs but gradually from the other, it must be a *boldness of Faith*, and in this Sense we are to come boldly to the *Throne of Grace.* Eph. 3. 12. *We have boldness and access with confidence, through the Faith of him.* Hence *Heb.* 4. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in a time of need.*

Thirdly, *The abruptness of the Phrase speaketh Passion, and Fervency. The fervent Prayer of the Righteous availeth much.* Jam. 5. 16. δέησις ἐνεργουμένη, The *working Prayer.* When the whole Soul is in Prayer set on work, the *Understanding* discerning the good the Soul prayeth for, discerning God able to give it, and willing also, discerning the Promise by which God hath made himself a Debter to the Creature for it. The *Will* in willing it, the *Affections* in intense desires of it. Men may pray, and their Souls be hardly set at work

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at all, only they so far as it influenceth the Eye to see Words in a Book, or the Understanding to invent Words which the Tongue may utter. This Prayer signifies little, it is the fervent working Prayer that availeth much, when the whole Soul is at work, wrestling with God as *Jacob* did, that it may receive the Blessing.

Fourthly, The form of the Word speaks *Reverence*: *Let him kiss me.* O that it might please the Lord to kiss me, (so much the Phrase sounds in our Dialect.) In all our Service of God, he requireth Reverence and a godly Fear. He that dareth not to come to God, but doubteth whether he may presume to ask of him, knoweth not the Lords goodness, he that dares to come without *Reverence* knoweth not the Lords Majesty, and Greatness. As *boldness* and Confidence without doubting, becomes us with respect to his Goodness, Love, and Faithfulness, so Fear and Reverence becomes us with reference to the Greatness and Majesty of the Divine Being.

Lastly her Speech speaketh *Modesty*: She asketh but a *Kiss*. Modesty is not opposite to an holy Boldness in Prayer. She peremptorily asks something which might speak his *special peculiar Love*: Yet there is a modesty imported in her words, in that she asketh no more than the *Kisses of his Mouth*. In three things we should shew a Modesty in Prayer, if it be rightly ordered.

1. *In the asking the good things of this Life, with a due Submission to the Will and Wisdom of God.* It speaketh too much boldness with God, to be too importunate for things that are not absolutely and infallibly good for us under all circumstances. It is enough for us that God hath promised to withhold from us no good thing. We prefer our own to the Divine Wisdom, in such importunities.

2. In the asking of *Spiritual Mercys* Modesty ought to be shewed also, in *submitting our selves to the Will of God*, as to *Dispensations*, or *Degrees of gracious* Manifestations, not absolutely necessary; they may be asked, but they ought to be asked with limitations; if God seeth they be good for us, if he that knoweth our Hearts, seeth that we will use them for his Glory, *&c.*

3. In not *prescribing time to God, as to the granting of those things, which are not in the present time necessary.* We ought to believe God wiser than our selves, and to limit our Requests by the Terms of his Promise, to beg the things which God hath promised, upon the Terms which he hath promised.

I have now finished my Discourses as to the Spouses first *Petition*, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth*: I shall in my next exercise proceed to the Argument by which she backeth this her first Petition, *For thy Loves are better than Wine.*

Sermon IX.

Canticles 1. 2.

For thy Loves are better than Wine.

I Have done with the Spouses first Petition, *Let him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth*: Wherein (as I have shewed) she manifested her Desire after near, and special Communion with her beloved, and some distinguishing token of his favour; I come now to the Argument, by which she backeth this Petition, that is expressed in the words I have now read to you. The Argument is drawn, *from the value she had for* his *Love.* The reason of her before mentioned Desire, was the excellency she apprehended, in the favour of her Lord, which she expresseth in a way of comparison; She saith, *It is better than Wine.* And she makes this her Estimate of the Love of Christ, an Argument for Gods manifestation of it to her Soul. I shewed you the Sense of the words before, I have nothing now to do, but to discourse the Propositions arising from the words so opened, the first of which was.

Prop. *That Christ hath Loves. There* are *Loves in Christ.* He is not onely lovely, and so the object of our Love, the *chiefest of Ten thousand*; but he is *Loving*, and we are the Objects of his Love. Of old, *He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his Delights were with the Sons of Men, Prov.* 8. 31. The Apostle telleth us, 1 *Jo.* 4. 16. *That God is Love.* It must be understood of *God in Christ*: For take Man as he is stated upon the Fall, and our *God* is towards him a *consuming Fire.* We are in that state as Stubble, dry Stubble, he is a *consuming Fire*; But the Apostle tells us

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2. *Cor.* 5. 19. That *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself.* God in Christ is *Love* toward poor Creatures. There are *Loves* in him. Let me a little open the Term. I desire you to take notice of Two things. 1. *That it is Spoken in the Abstract*; 2. *In the plural number*, not Love but Loves.

First, *Love* in the strict, and proper Notion of it, signifieth the Persons or the Creatures *Propension* and *Inclination* to *some Object, and its Complacency* in it. And in this Abstract, and purer Notion of it, it agreeth to the Divine Being, and Christ is the Subject of Love, There is in the eternal Son of God, strong Propensions and Inclinations to do good to the Sons of men. To love, the Philosopher saith, is *Velle bonum*; to will good to another: There is in Christ a Propension a strong Inclination to will good to the Sons of Men; He hath a Complacency in some of the Sons of Men. Love is a Term that signifies *Affections*, and all our Affections are but the motions of our Wills towards their Objects. We say, there are no *Affections in God*: That is true; But there is something in the Divine Being, which is proportionable to what in us we call *Affections*. In us Affections are extravagant Motions, mutable Passions; there are no such things in God: In us somthing out of our selves draws out our Love. There is no such *Passions and Affections* in God: But if we consider Love in its pure Nature, as it is the *kind motion of the Will to an Object*, so *Christ is Love*, and he hath Loves; that is, there is in him, pure and admirable Propensions and Inclinations of his Will to do good to the Children of Men, especially to some particular Soul's amongst the Sons of Men. These indeed are not kindled in the Divine Being, from any thing in us, or out of itself, as Flames of Love in the Creature usually are: Yet even in Creatures *Love* oftentimes is an inaccountable thing, but in God it is always so; he sheweth Mercy *because he will shew Mercy*, and loveth freely. That's the first thing.

But Secondly, The word is *plural*, not *Love* but *Loves*. God is one, and his *Love is one*, Christs Love is one in himself, but as the River, that went out of *Eden* to water the Garden of *Paradise* Gen. 2. 10. was one in its Original, and Source, *but from thence it was parted, and became into four Heads*. So that Oneness of the Divine Propension and Inclination to do good to poor Creatures, being out of the Divine Being it divides itself into many Heads, and as the Sea which is one in itself, yet as it passeth by several Lands and washeth upon various Shoars, receives several Names, and so admits of a plu-

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ral number; so the *Love* of *Christ*, which in him is but one *Good-will* to poor Creatures; yet as it sheweth itself, in Serving the necessities of various Souls, or the various necessities of the same Soul, so it becomes *Loves*, and admits of plurality, there is in Christ *pardoning Love*, and an *healing Love*, a *strengthening Love*. and a *comforting Love*; therefore the Spouse saith *Thy Loves*. There is but *One Love* in Christ, but it becomes many when it washeth upon various Shoars, and toucheth our diverse wants.

Thirdly, The *plural Number* speaketh the *Dimensions of that Love which is in Christ*, or rather the want of Dimensions in it. The *plural number* hath no bounds, the singular is bounded by Unity, but the plural hath no bounds, if you be to express Millions of Millions of Millions, 'tis all still but the plural number. *Loves* reacheth infiniteness. When the Spouse saith, *Thy Loves*, it is as much as thine infinite, unmeasurable Love, Christ hath not only a good Will, a kind Inclination, and Propension to the Sons of Men, but an infinite, unmeasurable, unfathomable Propension and Inclination to do good to the Souls of his Saints. The Apostle prayeth for the *Ephesians*. Eph. 3. 17, 18. *That Christ might dwell in their Hearts by Faith, that they being rooted and grounded in Love, might be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the bredth, and length, and depth, and heighth, and to know the Love of Christ which passeth knowledge*, *heighth*, and *depth*, and *length*, and *bredth*, are the boundaries of our knowledge but the Love of Christ passeth knowledge.

Fourthly, Love signifies some *Specialties of Affection*. A good man hath Love for many Women, but *Love's* only for the Wife of his Bosom. Loves signifie both a common, and a singular and special Love. Christ hath a *Philanthropy*, or common Love for all the Sons of Men; but he hath an *ἰδιότης*, a special Love and Kindness for some. *Joseph* caused all his Brethren, to have a Mess set them, but for *Benjamin*, a double Mess. God gave *Esau* the *Mountains of Edom*. There was Love, but *Jacob* had the Blessing, *Esau* had his Love, *Jacob* had his Loves. That the Gospel is preached to every Creature, is from Christs Love, but that any by the Gospel are made *New creatures* this is from his *Loves*. It is kindness to them that they have the Gospel, but a far greater kindness, a kindness of another nature to the Soul that it is inabled to receive the Gospel, and is turned into the likness of it.

5. *Loves* may signify the *Effects, and indications of Love*, and indeed

Terms

Terms of Affection applyed unto God, do very ordinarily in Scripture signify this, *Et affectum, & effectum*; Both the Motion of the Divine Will within itself and the effect of it, upon the Creature. So it is true, that Christ hath *Loves*, his Good-Will to poor Creatures doth not exhauſt itſelf in one or another Emanation, in one or another Stream, but in various Emanations, in a multitude of Streams, and thus you ſee there are two things in the Propoſition aſſerted.

1ſt. *That in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, there is an infinite, immeaſurable Good-Will to the Childr of Men, eſp[illegible] to ſuch of them as are by Faith united to him.*

2dly. *That this Good-will of Chriſt toward them, declareth itſelf in a great variety of Indications and Effects, Suted to their various neceſſities*; It is not a Love that evaporates in Air, as the Love of ſome impotent perſons, whoſe Love towards us terminates within their own Souls.

Theſe are the two Points I have to prove, and they are of exceeding eaſy demonſtration, to thoſe who believe the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, or the Matter, and Propoſitions of the whole Word of God.

Solomon tells us of Chriſt under the notion of *Wiſdom* (the Apoſtle calls Chriſt *The VViſdom of God*, 1. *Cor.* 1. 24.) that before *ever the Earth was*, when there *were no Depths* nor *Fountains abounding with VVater*, when God prepared the Heavens, and ſet a compaſs upon the face of the Deep, when he eſtabliſhed the Clouds, *Prov.* 8. 24. 25. 31. *He was Rejoycing in the habitable part of his Earth, and his Delights were with the Sons of Men.* The Apoſtle tells thoſe of the *Epheſians* who were Saints and faithful, *That they were choſen in Chriſt before the Foundation of the VVorld, that they ſhould be holy, and without blame before him, in Love, predeſtinated unto the Adoption of Children, by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his VVill. To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted through the Beloved, in whom we have, Redemption through his Blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the Riches of his Grace.* &c. There is no portion of the Word of God, that part of it eſpecially which we call the Goſpel, but affordeth us an abundant proof of this; What meant his being made *Surety* of a *better Covenant for us* (as the Apoſtle to the *Hebrews* tells us?) His being given for a *Covenant for the people*, Iſa. 42. 6. a *Light to the Gentiles, to open the Eyes of the blind to bring out the*

Priſoners

Prisoners from the Prison, and them that sit in Darkness out of the Prison-house? His being the Lamb slain from the beginning of the World, Rev. 13 8. His *Speaking by the Mouths of the Prophets* (as the Apostle tells us) His *growing up as a tender Plant, and as a Root out of a dry ground, having no form, nor comliness, nor beauty to be desired, his being despised, & rejected of men, a man of sorrows* and *acquainted with griefs, his bearing our griefs, and carrying our Sorrows, being Smitten of God,* and *afflicted,* his *being wounded for our Transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, when the chastisement of our peace lay upon him?* His suffering strips that we might be healed, &c. What signified his incarnation, his death and passion, his resurrection, and ascension, his taking care for his Gospel to be preach'd to every creature, &c. his being grieved for the hardness of peoples hearts, and troubled for their unbelief, his frequent preaching while he was upon the Earth, his weeping over *Hierusalem,* his invitations of people to come unto him that they might have life, his complaints that they would not come unto him, &c. I say what do all these things signify from him who needeth not his creature, being over all God blessed for ever, but that he hath loves, an infinite good will to the Children of men? No man is at cost, taketh pains in any business, suffereth hard things to go through it, but either out of kindness to himself or to another. Our Lord did not do, and suffer these things for himself, he had no need of them, if it were for us it speaks his loves.

2. But this is no more than what every one who owneth Christ, and the Gospel will easily grant, That *Christ is Love* and hath a Love for the Sons of men, yea and that there is an infiniteness, and unmeasurableness in the Love of Christ. But that he hath *Loves* in the Other sense: Some *Specialties of Love,* some particular propensions to some Souls more than others; this is what the proud world cannot so easily digest. Yet is this as plain in the Revelation of holy Writ as the other. It speaks of an *Election* or choice of some to Holiness and Happiness before the foundation of the world; the choice of Some must suppose the passing by or not electing others, experience shews us that not onely the good things of common providence, but even the external means of Grace are granted to some not to others.

3. Neither doth this grate so much. The most perverse opiners in this point must grant the publication of the Gospel, an *effect* of the *Love of Christ,* and that there is a very inequal distribution of it by the

the wise Providence of God, but as to them to whom the Gospel is alike preached, they know not how to allow *Loves in Christ*; have they then forgot what the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 9. 6. *For they are not all Israel which are of Israel; Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all Children: But in Isaac shall thy seed be called, that is, They who are the Children of the flesh these are not the Children of God, but the Children of the Promise counted for the seed.* And again. *Rom.* 2. 28. 29. *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that in the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.* Doth not experience teach us that even where the Gospel is preachd some *repent* of their sins, some are *hardened*, some *believe*, others are lockt up in unbelief, some are *holy* and *blameless*, others are *lewd*, and *profane*. But they will say. This is not from any *Loves in Christ*, he his alike to all, but from the differing motions and inclinations of the will of man. I yet ask, Whence is it? Seing human Souls are Equal and have the same powers, and faculties, how comes it that one man *loveth God*, and the ways of God, another hates and abhorreth every thing almost that hath the image and Superscription of God upon it? Is a man a God to himself and the first cause of any motions that are truly and spiritually good? Is it not God that giveth to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure? Hath a man any thing which is good which he hath not received? If one hath received such a power, such an inclination, such a disposition from God, there is Special Love; then Christ hath Loves besides a common *Philanthropy*, a good will to the generality of mankind, shewed in other things which will not bring Souls to Eternal Salvation, he hath a special Love and kindness to some Souls, which he manifesteth in such dispensations to it, as shall certainly bring the Soul to Eternal Life and Salvation; and these are those of which the text Speaks.

But I have Spoken enough in evidence of so plain a Proposition as this is. I come to the application.

1st. *How should this Revelation of Christ reconcile the world unto him.* Christ hath Loves for us, why should there be found in our hearts, or ways, any *hatred* to, or opposition against him? Yet is not the World full of this? What is an opposition to the publication of his Gospel, an hatred to his Ministers, to his People, to his Laws, and holy Institutions, but an hatred to him? Use 1.

Christ hath so judged of it, he told some of the first Ministers of his Gospel, Math. 10. 14, 15. *That in the day of Judgment it should be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrha *than for those that did not receive them, and hear his words.* Wicked men, and Enemies to the Gospel are in Scripture called *unreasonable men*, 2. Thessal. 3. 2. *Absurd men.* The absurdness, and unreasonableness of men that are Enemies to Christ and the Gospel (for of such the Apostle speaketh there, praying to be delivered from those that are unreasonable upon many accounts, but eminently in this, that they hate, & do all the despight & mischief they can, to him who is full of Loves to them. We shall sometimes find in men and women a strange aversion from such as truly Love them, they cannot get up their hearts, to love a man, or woman, that Loves them, but it is very brutish, very unreasonable for any of us to hate, and malign, and to seek to destroy one that Loves us. Such brutes are all those that are Enemies to Christ and his Gospel. Christ hath Loves for us, these Loves are declared in his Gospel, that declareth God in Christ reconciling the world to himself not imputing their sins; the publication of the Gospel, is a great act of this Love, the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, are the Messengers to publish this Love; what an unreasonable thing it is now for men to make them the But of their malice? I remember when the Jews cryed out concerning Christ, *Crucify him, Crucify him*, and *Pilate* asked them, why? *What evil hath he done?* They like a company of unreasonable bruits could give him no answer, but still they cryed out the more, *Crucify him, Crucify him.* Doth not the same brutish cry hold up even at this day in some wretches mouths. They can give no reasonable account why they should oppose the publication of the Love of Christ to poor lost Sinners, yet they do it with a rage reaching up to Heaven. This is now to be unreasonable men. why should you persecute him who loveth you. Yet verily as St. *Paul* said of himself *The* more *he loved the Galathians the less he was beloved of them*, So it feareth with Christ, and all that hath relation to him the more faithful the Minister of Christ is in preaching the Gospel, the more diligent, and zealous he is to gain Souls to Christ, the most hated he is, and the reason is because it thus fared with Christ. *Joh.* 15. 18. If *the world hateth you, you know it hated me before it hated you.* But Oh let this reconcile your hearts unto Christ. *That he hath Loves.* No ingenuous man but will repay Love for Love. He who repayeth hatred for Love, is of the Devil eminently, he doth

evil

Evil without a provocation, because he Loves to do Evil.

Secondly, What an Invitation doth this Notion afford *to the most miserable, forlorn Souls, to Kiss the Son, to receive, and close with the Lord Jesus Christ.* Whilest our Lord was, upon the Earth, he told the people, *That when he was lifted up he should draw all men after him.* Alas! that this word [*All*] in that Text must be englished by *Many*. Christ is lifted up upon the Cross, and therein he hath shewed us, that he hath *Loves*, Infinite *Loves*: For *Greater Love than this hath no man shewn, than that a man lay down his Life for his Friends.* Yet this is greater Love, *while we were Enemies he dyed for us*; Yet how few are drawn after him? How few can be perswaded to accept him as their Lord and Saviour? What is the reason one man is drawn after his sensual Appetites, after his Lusts, and those draw quite from Christ? Men cannot be his Disciples, except they deny themselves, mortify their Members. Others are drawn after the World, and are not at leasure to come to Christ; and besides, the friendship of the World is enmity with God! Others have some thoughts of coming to Christ, but they are afraid Christ should not receive them. I shall have occasion to Speak to the 2*d* sort when I come to the next Proposition, to shew you that Christs Loves *are better then Wine*: Indeed both to the first and Second I might Speak as *Saul* once to his Courtyers *will the Son of Jesse give you Vine-Yards, &c.* Can the World, can your Lusts, give you Peace of Conscience and joy in the holy Ghost? Will they bring you to the favour of God, and to eternal Life? But they are onely the 3*d* Sort whom I would here Speak to. Is there a Soul here that is almost perswaded to be a Christian? A Christian, not in Name, but in Deed, and is afraid Christ should not be willing to receive it? Hear what God saith 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. *Come out from amongst them, and be you separate* (*saith* the Lord) *and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.* Observe what I have bin discoursing, *Christ hath Loves*, an Inclination and Propension to do good to the Sons of Men; He hath declared it in a variety of gracious Acts from before the Foundation of the World. It encouraged the Servants of *Benhadad* to go to *Ahab*, to beg their Masters Life, that they had heard that the *Kings of Israel were merciful Kings.* Let this be an incouragement to you to come to Christ, to hear that Christ is a merciful High Priest, who casteth away none that cometh unto him. Certainly it would incourage the greatest malefactor to go to a Prince to beg his pardon, and to throw

Use 2.

himself into the arms of his grace and mercy, if he could but be perswaded, that the Prince were full of Love, and had a particular propension and inclination of kindness to the family from which he derived. This you have heard particularly made good to you concerning Christ. You that have been the greatest trangressors, the oldest Sinners, yet return and come, I remember, when Isaac told *Esau*, that *Jacob* had come before him, and got the blessing, he replyed, *Father thou hast many blessings, bless me also.* It may be you may be thinking so in your hearts, such, and such persons, they have obtained the blessing, they had not been so vile, so profane as I have been. O but yet remember, the Lord Jesus Christ hath many blessings, *not Love*, but *Loves*, come unto him, and he shall bless thee also. When thy thoughts are overwhelm'd in the thoughts of thy sins, sink them again into the thoughts of Christs Loves, thou wilt find that is as great a depth as the other is; Yea thou will find the same difference as betwixt the Shore, and the main Sea. Near the Shore the Mariner may find it several fathom water enough to drown a man: But off at Sea, he finds himself out of the soundings, all the lines he hath will find no bottom So a Soul in the thoughts of his sins may find himself beyond his depth, he is drowned in the thoughts of them. Ah but yet there is a Sounding, his Sins are not Infinite; so there is a sounding, but if he lancheth his thoughts into the depths of Gods grace, and Christs Loves, there is no soundings, let therefore no Soul be discouraged from coming unto Christ.

Use 4. Fourthly. Hath Christ Loves? *How sutable a Saviour hath God provided for poor sinful creatures.* The Apostle to the *Hebrews* Heb. 7. 26. having said of Christ. *v.* 25. *That he is able to the uttermost to Save them that come unto God by him* addeth *For such an high Priest became us, &c.* Give me leave upon this argument to make use of the same words. Christ hath Loves, such a Saviour became the Sons of men, and that upon a three fold account.

1. *As love stands opposed to hatred, and wrath, and Enmity.* Considering man as Gods Creature, he was not hated of God, God hateth not the work of his own hand; but considering him as a lapsed creature as degenerated into the Plant of a strange Vine, after that God had created him a generous, noble plant, so he became the object of Gods wrath, hatred, and Enmity. We were *Children of wrath* by nature saith the Apostle, Eph. 2. 3. *God is angry with the wicked every day.* How Sutable, to us now is it, to have a *Saviour*? That is *Love*, and who hath Loves, considering the aversion

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in the holy Divine Being, from Mankind as rebellious Seed, a Seed of Evil-doers? Who could have suited us to have become a Saviour unto us, but one who had a kind propension, and inclination to us, inclining him to the great work of mans Redemption, and Reconciliation to God, especially also considering that there could be no remission of sins without blood, no reconciliation without the reconcilers Death, he had need have loves that should dye for his Friend, and he much more who should dye for Enemies that were by his death to be made friends.

2. As *Loves signifies multitude*, and *infiniteness of Love*. We have all a multitude of sins, and there is a kind of infiniteness in sin; indeed our Acts of Sin are not infinite, we cannot number them, we cannot measure them, but they are to be numbred, that is our comfort; so that the ballance is on Gods side, he hath infinite Mercies. But there is an infiniteness of a will to sin in every Sinners heart, if a Sinner were let alone he hath such a depth of vileness in his heart, that if he were to live infinitely he would sin without limits, without bounds, infinitely; there is an infiniteness in the guilt of Sin, we had need of a Saviour that should have Loves, an infinite of Love, a multitude of Mercies for our multitude of Sins, numberless pardons for numberless Sinnings; we Sinned yesterday, we sin this day, and we shall sin to morrow If Christ had not *Loves*, we could have no hopes.

3. Thirdly such a Saviour became us. *As Loves signifyes* a *Variety* of *gracious* inclinations. We have a variety of wants, Our wants are not all of one nature, we have need of Love to *pardon us* and to bring us into a state of favour, Love to preserve us, and uphold us when we are in such a state of favour, One or another gracious aspect, and inclination of Christ, would not have been enough for our Souls, which are not onely miserable, and stand in need of mercy, but *poor*, and stand in need of the riches of divine grace, and *naked*, and stand in need of the long White robe of Christs righteousness, and *blind*, and stand in need of his *Eye Salve*. We are all Emptiness, and stand in need of his fulness that we might receive of his fulness, Grace for Grace. Less than infinite *Loves*, and variety of gracious inclinations, a readiness to serve our Souls in a variety of distresses with a sutable Supply of grace, grace suited to every necessity of our Souls could not have fitted our Souls which have not only wants and infirmities, but are incompassed about with wants, and infirmities.

Fifthly, Let this report of Christ to your Souls ingage you to indeavour to be made *the Objects of these Loves*. I have observed to you Use 5.

you before, that this text doth not speak of the *Love of Christ*, with respect to his *Father* but with respect to us, to the Sons of men; they are the objects of the *Loves of Christ* here mentioned. How should we all study and indeavour that we may be the Beloved, the objects of these Loves, not of his Love onely, but of his Loves. *Arminians* keep a great deal of stir with a *Philanthropy* in Christ, a common Love, which he hath for all the Sons, and daughters of men. Nor is the question betwixt them, and other Divines so much about the thing, as the extent of it. Sober Divines will (many of them) grant in Christ a *common Love to all mankind* and speak of some things which they take to be the effects, and products of it; but admit it, yet it is certain he hath also an *εὐδοκία*, a good pleasure of his will, or Special kindness to some Souls. So he hath Loves; that is, the benignity, and kindness of his inclinations is more to Some than to others. Let none of us satisfy our selves to be the Object of *Christs Love*, unless we be the *object of his Loves*. I shall press this onely with One Argument. It is this; *Nothing but the Loves of Christ can serve our Souls as to their true Spiritual and eternal Concernment*. There is a great stir made in the world, about a common Love which Christ should have for all the Sons, and daughters of men, and there are many that would make the *Death of Christ* to be the Effect of this *Common Love*. And so conclude that he intentionally *dyed for all and Every man*. Others are not of that mind, but yet will allow, all men and women in the world to receive some good from Christ and that not onely considered as *God over all blessed for ever*, and one with his *Father*, and so in him we live, move and have our Being; But as *Mediator*. It is from him they say, that the world yet stands, that the *Gospel is preached to the worst of men*. I see little in this worth the contending for. I would gladly know what real advantage accrueth to any Soul from being the common object of Divine Love? Admitting that all shall not be saved for whom Christ dyed (which they must hold who hold that Christ dyed for *all* and every man, unless they hold universal Salvation) I would fain know what relief any Soul can have from this notion of *Christs dying for all* which some so much contend for? Supposing that all men shall not be saved, but those onely, whom Christ hath loved with a *Special Love*? Nothing can possibly revive a Soul troubled as to its Spiritual, and eternal concerns, but some evidence of that. It is said of the young man who came to Christ so hopefully, *Mar.* 10. 21 *kneeling* to him, & saying, *Master what good thing may I do that I*

may

may obtain everlasting Life; that he loved him. With that general Love which he hath for all his Creatures especially such as have any seeds of goodness in them; yet the Text saith he *went away Sorrowful.* Let us labour for the Special Love of Christ: Such tokens of his Love as may distinguish betwixt us and those who shall perish.

But (to shut up this Discourse.) This notion calleth upon all of us who would be like Christ to have *Loves* also. There are two *Loves*, which are much our duty upon this view of our great *Lord and Master*, 1. *Love to him.* 2 *Love to our Neighbours*, especially those in whom any thing of Christs appears. Use 6.

1. It calls to us for *Loves to Christ.* This in point of gratitude; *If* (Saith our Saviour) *you love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the Publicans the same?* Our Love to Christ is but a Love to him who hath Loves for us, and indeed this speaketh to all men for Love to him, but more especially, *O Love ye the Lord, all you his Saints.* It is the opinion of great Divines, that all the world is beholden to Christ as Mediator, that from his Mediation there issueth some good to the worst of men. But he hath eminently extended his Love to his Saints, he hath loved them with a singular Love. If there should be Love wanting in their hearts to Christ they should be of all men, and women in the world most inexcusable, what cou'd he have done for any of the Sons of Men which he hath not done for them? What greater thing could they have asked of him, then he hath prevented them in asking? O Love you the Lord all you they that believe. Do you ask me how you should shew your Love to him? The first motions of Love are in the heart; Love there is seen in delighting in him, breathing after him. It next shews itself by the lips Speaking well of him to others, defending his interest, and concern in the world. If we come to more external acts; That of *David*, Ps. 16. 2. 3. is true here, *O my Soul thou hast said unto the Lord thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints that are in the earth, to the excellent on whom is all my delight.* Our Love to Christ must be seen in our actings in our stations for the honour, glory, and concern of Christ in the world. In our kindness to the poor flock of Christ. Christ calls a want of Love to them a want of Love to himself 25. *Math.* But that brings me to the Second with a short discourse upon which I shall shut up this discourse.

2. It calls you for *Love to men* especially to those in whom you see any thing of Christ. The argument for this ariseth from our duty

duty to study a *Conformity to Christ*, he had a kindness for all, when he was born, *good will towards men* was proclaimed by the multitude of the Heavenly host *Luke.* 2. 14. There also lyeth an obligation upon us from the law of Christ and from this great Example, to be kindly affectionate toward all, There lyeth also a Precept upon us to *do good to all.* And again saith the Apostle. *Owe nothing to any, but this; That you love one another.* Indeed there is not the same degree of affection, nor the same acts of Love due to all (as to that we must be ruled by the Word of God,) but *Love* is a debt upon us which is due to all men. Therefore *wrath, hatred, anger, strife, malice,* are every where reckoned up by the Apostle as the fruits not of the Spirit but of the flesh. In a kind Child of God there should be a general love and kindness to all mankind, though to be expressed in a Scriptural order as to the degrees, and acts of it. So it was in Christ.

2. But secondly it calls to you for a more *Special distinguishing Love to all those in whom you see any thing of Christ. Do good to all* (saith the Apostle) but *especially to the houshold of Faith.* The Soul of every Member of Christ should cleave to these, with whom he is united, not onely by a *common nature* (being the same flesh and blood with him) but by a *common faith*, by the ligament of Members of the same body, whereof Christ is the head. Give me leave to press this the more upon this argument because I find the Apostle St. *John* pressing it upon the same Topick, 1. *John.* 4. 11. *If God so loved us we ought also to Love one another.* v. 12. —*If we love one another God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us,* v. 16. He tells us that *God is love* and *he that dwelleth in Love dwelling in God.* Every good Christian may see much more in the meanest, poorest true Christian to ingage him to Love him or her, than Christ could ever see in the highest Saint to oblige or move Christ to love him or her. *When thou wallowedst in thy blood*, when thou hadst nothing of the lineament of a Saint in thy Soul not so much as a line of any Spiritual Goodness, he passed by thee, and it was with him a time of Love as to thy Soul; there is not a child of God in the world, but there is something of holiness, and righteousness, something of the image and Superscription of Christ to be seen in his Soul, something of the Divine nature resplendent in his Soul. It may be there is more in some, less in others, but there is in all some. When thou hast a temptation upon thee to aversate thy brother, or to turn away thy heart, or head,

or

or hand from him. O *remember* Christ hath loves and *and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in him.* And that it is he whose heart is full of of *Loves* for thee who hath commanded thee to Love thy Brother. But I have spoken e nough to this first Propoſition.

Sermon X.

Canticles 1. 2.

For thy Loves are better than Wine.

IN my laſt diſcourſe I ſhewed you that *Chriſt hath Loves*, kind affections, and inclinations to the Children of men and more eſpecially to the Souls of his Saints, which he is ready to declare and expreſs, yea hath already expreſſed in acts of kindneſs, and theſe not of one but various kinds, ſuted to the reſpective neceſſities of his people, a ſalve for every Sore, a Supply for every want. I come now to ſhew you the quality of his *Loves*, which in my Text is ſet down *poſitively*, and comparatively. In our tranſlation according to our Idioms or propriety of Speech the poſitive is to be underſtood in the comparative particle. A thing cannot be called *better* than another, unleſs it hath ſome poſitive abſolute goodneſs in it ſelf, but in the *Hebrew* it is more plainly expreſſed. That ſaith, *Are good before Wine.* (It is their way of expreſſing comparatives.) It makes no difference in the ſenſe. *Good before Wine. And better than wine*, are phraſes of the ſame ſenſe. In the Explication of the Text I told you that though Wine ſtrictly ſignifies the juice of the Grape, yet by a *Synechdoche* here it ſignifyeth all created goods whatſoever can be ſweet or profitable or advantageous to us. The Propoſition is plainly this.

Prop. *The Loves of Chriſt are good befo e* [or better than] *all created comforts, and enjoyments whatever.* I have already ſhewed you what the *Loves of Chriſt* ſignify, *viz.* His good will, his kind affections and inclinations to the Souls of men. Of theſe here the Spou-

ses predicates. 1. *A goodness.* 2. A transcendent and excelling goodness. My work must be to demonstrate both. 1. *That they are good.* 2. *That they are good before wine,* before all Sublunary goods, all created comforts of what nature soever. 1. That they are good.

The true nature of all good lyes in the conveniency and Sutableness of things which we so call to some wants, and necessities that we have and lye under. Hence the Philosopher describes *Good* to be the Object of our desires, what all men desire, for we desire nothing, but in order to the supply of some want or other that we are sensible, and apprehensive of. A man may indeed desire what is not good, but he must apprehend some goodness in the thing which he desireth. So that to demonstrate the *loves of Christ* to be good, there needs no more than to prove them *convenient,* and admirably Suited to some thing which we want to Supply us in that want. That I may restrain my discourse to the *Loves* of Christ as *mediator,* I shall only premise, what I hope you all believe: That we have Souls as well as Bodies, the Soul is an essential part of man, and as much excelling and better than the Body, as the body is better than rayment This admitted, whatsoever suiteth the *Souls wants* must necessarily be *good* and eminently good. The Souls wants are many, but its principal wants are reducible to five heads. 1. *Pardon, Righteousness, Peace, Purity, Hopes, or assurance of Eternal life and Glory.*

1. It wanteth *pardon of Sin.* This is a want which the Soul brought into the world with it, it was by nature dead in trespasses and Sins, conceived in Sin, brought forth in iniquity, a Child of *wrath by nature Eph.* 2, 3. This want hath grown upon the Soul from the day of its birth. Its Child-hood and youth were altogether vanity; who knows the Errours of his life? The righteous falls seven times a day, who can tell how often he offendeth? It is true, not one of many is sensible of this want, but that only increaseth their misery. It is certain this is a great want of a Soul, Christ else had never directed us to pray, *Forgive us our debts.* There is a debt of ten thousand Talents, upon every Soul, that hath not tasted of Christs pardoning grace. That it is not arrested for it proceeds only from Gods patience, who sometimes beareth long with vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. The Love of Christ is Suited to this want. It is he that forgiveth Sins and washeth the Soul from the guilt of sin with his blood. *He dyed for our sins* (saith the Apostle.)

He

He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities saith the Prophet *Isaiah. Ch.* 53. 5. We have Redemption, and forgiveness of Sins through his blood. This Love of his, is so suited to this want of the Soul, that it can be supplyed no other way. God forgiveth sin and none but he: who but the creditor can discharge the debtor; but it is for Christs sake that God forgiveth us, *Eph.* 4. 32. Without blood there is no remission; this was tipyfyed (as the Apostle teacheth us) by the Beasts of old slain for Sacrifices of Expiation, and Atonement, and without *his Blood* we could have had no Remission; for it is very vain (as the same Apostle instructs us) for any to think that the blood of *Bulls* and *Lambs* and *Goats* could do away Sin.

2. Secondly, *The Soul wants Righteousness.* A righteousness wherein it should stand before God as if it had never sinned against him. For the righteous Lord (saith the Psalmist) loveth righteousness, and the Apostle tells us *Rom.* 3. 15. *That God declareth his righteousness for the remission of Sins.* Such is the nature, or at least such is the will, of God, that he remits no sins, but upon a first declaration of his *righteousness.* Neither doth God accept any Soul but the righteous Soul: we have no righteousness, our works will not make this Web. God therefore imputeth *Righteousness without works. Rom.* 4. 6. In the Gospel God hath *revealed his righteousness from faith to Faith.* Rom. 1. 17. This is the righteousness of Christ. *Rom.* 8. 3. *For what the law could not do because it was weak through our flesh, that God himself hath done, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemning sin in the flesh, That the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us.* Hence Christ is by the Prophet called the *Lord our Righteousness*, and the Apostle saith he was made of God for us *wisdom, righteousness*; And hence the Apostle Prayeth. *Philip.* 3. 8, 9. *That* he might *win Christ*, which he expounds. *v.* 9. *And be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* It is called the *Righteousness of God* because it is that which God accepteth us for; the *righteousness* of Christ, because it is his perfect Satisfaction to, and obedience to the law; and the *righteousness of faith* because it is by *faith*, by us received, and applyed, and made ours. But in Christ and from Christ the Soul must find, and have that righteousness in which alone it can stand before God.

3. A third great want of the Soul is *Peace.* Peace with God.

Peace with itself. *Rom.* 8. 7. The *Carnal mind is Enmity to God.* Take a man in his natural state, he is an Enemy to God, and God is an Enemy to him. He hath no peace with God, and if he hath any quiet in his own mind, it is but a Truce not a Peace, the product of Gods silence, not the product of his favour. Now in Christ and in him alone the Soul hath peace. In the world (saith our Saviour to his disciples) *you shall have trouble, but in me you shall have peace.* My peace, saith he, I give unto you, I leave with you; It is he that hath reconciled the whole number of the elect to God by his death, and it is he who doth by his Spirit, and the word of reconciliation committed to his Ministers actually reconcile Souls unto himself. He is therefore called our *Peace*, we have *Peace with God through him, Rom.* 5. 1. And therefore the Apostle in all his Salutations prefixed to his Epistles prayeth, Mercy and *Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. A fourth great want of the Soul is *Purity. No unclean* thing shall enter into the new *Jerusalem*, Take the Soul of a Christian Naturally, it is an impure, filthy Soul; what can be clean that is born of a Woman? Or how can that which is clean come from that which is unclean? The connate proneness of our hearts to whatsoever is evil, and the natural aversion of our hearts to any thing that is good is a sufficient proof of this. The promise of the clean heart, and of the new heart in *Ezek.* 36. (as you know) are both from God. and *Heb.* 9. 14. the Apostle tells, us *That the blood of Christ purgeth our Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God:* Hence the Apostle. 1. *Cor.* 1. 30. Telleth us, that Christ is made unto us Wisdom, *Sanctification*, and Redemption.

5. The 5th great Want of the Soul which I mentioned was, *Hopes* or *Assurance*, of an *happy Existence* to all eternity: This Want now accrueth from the Soul's *Immortality.* The Consideration that God hath created us under an Ordination to an *Eternal Existence* and *State.* Admitting this (which indeed is the main thing that distinguisheth a reasonable Soul from the Soul of a brute Creature) it is impossible that the Soul should be under any degree of Happiness, that hath not some *Hopes* or *Assurance* of *Glory*, That its Soul shall go to God when it leaveth the Body. And that the Body shall rise again in a *joyful Resurrection*, in which it shall be again united to the Soul, that both may live with God for ever. Now this is a Good which floweth unto the Soul, from the *Loves of Christ:* This needs no further

proof

proof than: 1. That no Soul is born to this glorious, and incorruptible Inheritance, for we are by *nature Children of Wrath*, and *eternal life is the Gift of God*, (as the Apostle tells us) Rom. 6. *The Gift of God is eternal Life*, and it is a gift which cometh from God to us by the Hands of Christ. John 17. 2. *As thou hast given him Power over all Flesh that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him*: And *John* 10. 28. Speaking of his sheep (saith he) I *give unto them eternal Life, and they shall never perish.* Now as their having a certain right to, and their future possession of eternal Life, is necessary for them in another Life, when this transitory Life shall be determined; so the hopes, or full assurance of it is necessary for them, to make them in any measures happy while they live here. And this is in, and from, Christ also, and therefore he is called *our Hope*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 1. And the the Apostle, *Col.* 1. 27. saith, *Christ in us is the Hopes of Glory*: That is, all the Hopes we have of Glory are from Christ. This is abundantly enough to evince that positive goodness that is in the *Loves of Christ*, their high and sutable conveniencies to the necessities and wants of our Souls. I shall in the next place shew you the transcendent Goodness and excellency that is in them, that they are, as the Text saith, *Better then Wine*, or as it is expressed in the *Hebrew Idiome*, *good before Wine. Wine*, as I have before shewed you, literally Signifies the Juice of the Grape. *Figuratively* whatsoever is good, sweet and excellent in the World. Now take it in one or both Senses, The Demonstration is very easy. I shall make it in 3 particulars.

1. First all *the Goodness that is in Wine*, (taken either *litterally* for the Juice of the Grape, or *Figuratively* for all created comforts) *lies in a Sutableness of them*, (and that but for a time neither) to the more *external wants of a Creature.* Three things must be yielded concerning all created *Goods.* 1. *None of them reach the wants of the Soul, which is the best and noblest part of man.* What do *Pleasures, Riches, Honours*, whatsoever this world affordeth, signify as to the Souls wants? It wants *Pardon of sins*; Will any of these procure or purchase it? It wants a *Righteousness wherein to stand before God*; Will these procure it? It wants *Peace of Conscience*, Will those give it? It wants *Purity*, Will they cleanse it? It naturally wants a *Right and title to Glory*, and the *Hopes or Assurance of it*; Can any of these help the Soul to it? They indeed sute the more external wants of Man. The wanton Sense wants grateful Objects, They will Supply it; The body wants Food, and Rayment, they will Supply it; But

for

for the more inward Spiritual Wants of the Soul, they have no Sutableness to them, no conveniency. But (as I have shewed you) the Loves of Christ have, nay, they are not onely suted to the Souls greatest wants but to the Bodies also, at least so far as the Soul hath influence on the Body, upon the Happiness of which it undoubtedly hath; for a *good Conscience is a continual feast*: The Contentment which Grace filleth the Soul with, the Mortification, and Subduing of the Passions, and stubborn Will of Man, have a great Reflection upon the Health and chearfulness of the Body. So that here is a double Argument to prove the Loves of Christ better than Wine. 1. *From their Sutableness to the necessities and wants of the Soul, which* are the wants of the noblest part of man. 2. *From their sutableness to the wants both of Soul and body*, by reason of the Reflection which the Souls good hath upon the outward Man, even in this Life, to say nothing of the joyful Resurrection of the Body, and the Happiness both of Body, and Soul, reunited in the Enjoyment of God for ever. 2. *All created Comforts last but for a Season*, and that a *little Season*. They only sute the wants of our Bodies in this Life. *Riches profit not in the day of Wrath*: Honours lie down with our Bodies in the dust. Pleasures cease, when our senses which they gratified are gone: Nay very often the Sutableness or gratefulness of these created Goods extinguisheth before the determination of our natural Lives. When *Barzillai* was Fourescore years old his Eye took no pleasure in seeing, nor his Ear in hearing. There are daies in this Life, Eccles. 12. 7. *in which a man shall say he hath no pleasure in them*? What do *Riches*, Honours, Friends, Pleasures, signify in a day of Sickness? 3. *No created good* suteth all our wants, one suteth one want, another fills up another Emptiness, none suteth all: But the Love of Christ as it suteth our Soul wants, So it is Suted to all times, and is certain, and a Supply to all wants of Souls. This is my first Argument to prove his Loves better then Wine.

2. Secondly *there is no need or want, which Wine, or created goods supplieth but the Love of Christ will supply, and much more eminently, and abundantly*: Let me open this in a few particulars.

1. *Wine in regard of the Subtile, Spirituous nature of it, hath a great vertue to exhilarate the Spirits and to raise up the Affection of Joy.* Hence you read of those *who shout by reason of Wine. Psal.* 78. 65. And the Psalmist saith, *Wine makes glad the heart of Man.* Psal. 104. 15. and *Ecc.* 10. 19. *Wine maketh merry.* But do not the Loves of Christ do this much more? Eph. 5. 19. *And be you not drunk*

drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess, but be you filled with the Spirit, speaking to your selves in Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs, making Melody in your heart to the Lord. David, Psal. 4. cries out, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon me, for thou thereby shalt make my heart more glad then theirs, when their Corn, and Wine, and Oil increaseth.* Those who are critical in words in the Latine Tongue distinguish between *Voluptas* and *Gaudium.* Pleasure they make to be nothing but the Sensual Appetites Satisfaction, 'tis common to Beasts as well as Man. *Gaudium* or Joy they make to be the procede of the satisfaction of the *rational Appetite*; the first is meerly sensual, and beastly, the latter alone becometh a Man who is a reasonable Creature. I am sure that *Mirth* which is in the Soul of man, that Exhilaration of his Spirits, which ariseth from the sense and apprehension of the Love of Christ unto the soul, is a Satisfaction to the Rational, Spiritual Appetite; so the nature of it must be more Spiritual, more Suted to the reasonable creature, then any Wine, or indeed any created comforts can be.

2. *Wine is of excellent use to allay our thirst,* and in *Physick and Chirurgery* under *deliquiums, &c.* This is a great excellency that is in it. *Prov.* 31. 6. *Give wine to those of heavy hearts.* In Chirurgery it is of use to *wash and cleanse wounds, &c.* Hence you read in the Gospel, of the good *Samaritane* that he put *Wine* and *Oil* into the wounds of the man that was fallen amongst thieves. But in this respect are not the loves of Christ good before Wine? Wine onely satisfieth the cravings of nature, the drought of the body for want of moisture. If a Soul *hungers and thirsteth after righteousness,* Wine will not allay that thirst, the Loves of Christ will; and surely the thirstings of a Soul are far greater wants than the want of liquor for the body. Wine may be of some use in *Deliquiums* and failures of the Vital, and Animal Spirits. But if the Soul *fainteth* for *Gods Salvation,* Wine is of no use, the Loves of Christ are. Wine may wash and purify the wounds of the body and keep them from putrefaction, but the Loves of Christ alone can purify the wounds of a Soul and resist putrefaction there. *He was annointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to appoint to them that mourn in Sion, Beauty for Ashes, and the Oil of gladness for the Spirit of heaviness.* Isaiah 61. 1, 2, 3.

3. *Wine will make a man forget his affliction. Prov.* 31. 6, 7. *Give wine to him who is of a heavy heart, let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more*; but now wine doth this by bringing

bringing a man unto a kind of ſtupefaction or temporary deliration, and the Affliction, muſt be meerly external, and not in extremity. Wine makes a Man forget his affliction onely by putting him beſides himſelf. The Loves of Chriſt have a proportionable effect upon the Soul, but of a far more high and excellent nature. Let a Soul be bowed down to Hell and not know what to do, Let but the *Loves* of Chriſt ſhine upon it in the ſealing of any promiſe, it forgets all its poverty, and miſery. The Soul will rejoyce in *Sufferings, glory in tribulation*, &c. the *Martyr* cries out that the fire is but as a *Bed of Roſes*. So that you ſee there is never a good quality in Wine but ſomething proportionable to it, (only infinitely excelling) is to be found in Chriſts loves.

My laſt demonſtration of the truth of this Propoſition is this. *Wine* though it hath many excellent qualities, yet hath it alſo ſome *ill qualities*; The *Loves of Chriſt* are not ſuch. There is an *exceſs in* Wine ſaith the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19. *Be not drunk with* Wine *wherein is exceſs*. It is a *mocker* (ſaith *Solomon*) it will *intoxicate*, breed many diſeaſes, many a one periſheth by drinking too much Wine. But no Soul ever periſhed from the exceſs of Chriſts love to it, no Soul ever contracted any diſtemper from it, *be you filled with the Spirit*, ſaith the Apoſtle in the ſame Text, where he tells us there is an *exceſs in* Wine.

Much of what I have ſaid concerning the excellency of the love of Chriſt above Wine, taken in a literal ſenſe, is as true concerning it, in its figurative ſenſe, as it may be ſuppoſed and interpreted to ſignify any created comforts, they only are ſuited to our *External wants* only, they are but *temporary* and *uncertain*, they alſo have ſome *ill qualities* attending them. I ſhall therefore add no more Doctrinally.

Uſe 1. By way of application. We may in the firſt place obſerve *in o what a degree of debauchery the generality of the Sons and Daughters are fallen*. Nothing more becomes a Man or Woman conſidered as a reaſonable Creature, than to diſcern aright betwixt things that differ, and to judge aright concerning them, and accordingly to make our *Election*, and to guide our practice. But ſuppoſing what you have heard to be truth, where is the man of many, that rightly diſcerneth, rightly judgeth, or aright guideth himſelf in practice? where is the man that judgeth the loves of Chriſt better than Wine.

How many are there that judge Wine *better then the loves of Chriſt*. Wine, not in the figurative ſenſe, as it ſignifies all outward, created comforts, but in the literal ſenſe, as it ſignifieth nothing but the *juice*

of

of the Grape, fermented and a little refined from its dregs, doth not every one thus judge, *that useth Wine immoderately?* that sits bibbing at a Tavern until the Wine inflameth him, Christ by his Apostle *Paul* hath said, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19. *Be not drunk with Wine wherein is excess.* How many are there, that *tarry long at the Wine, that go to seek mixt Wine, that look upon wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright*, till at last *it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder*, till it causeth *woe, and sorrow, and contentions, and wounds, and redness of the Eyes* (as *Solomon* Speaketh, Prov. 23. 29, 30, 31.) and yet have no sense of the Loves of Christ, no thoughts of it, make no enquiries after it, take no course for the obtaining it. Do not those poor wretches Love wine better than the *Love of Christ*, that will not abate life a cup of wine to gain it? Those that for an intemperate cup of wine, will be disobedient to the rule which Christ hath given them. My Soul in this contemplation, even akes to think what will become of drunkards, by whom I mean not those only who reel in the streets and are intoxicated with Wine, but those who take a greater pleasure in drinking than in praying or hearing the word of God or obeying his will.

2. But if we extend the notion of wine further, to signify all sensual Satisfactions, all created comforts, Lord how many are there in the world that in this betray their folly, and discover the corruption, and debauchery of humane nature. How few are there in the world that do not prefer some creature or other before the loves of Christ; indeed as the Poet saith — *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*; Every one is not alike taken with every sensual object, the Apostle tells us we have ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας, every one hath his proper lust and corruption by which he is drawn, away, the lusts of the flesh, are one mans *proper lust*, the *lust of the Eye*, is anothers proper lust, the *pride of life* is anothers. Separate from mankind, *drunkards, lascivious persons, vain persons*, persons that are *covetous*, and too greedy of the worlds riches, *ambitious men*, whose God is honour and applause, credit and reputation in the World, how few will you leave? But I hear some say this is an hard censure upon mankind, men indeed are flesh, and blood, man hath natural Senses and naturally seeks the gratification, and Satisfaction of them, but we hope we do not prefer the satisfaction of them before the *Loves of Christ* shewed in the *pardon of sin, peace of conscience, purity of heart, the hopes of glory.* This were a very sad thing, and it is a very hard judgment to pass upon any Soul; we must

plead not guilty to this Indictment. Say you so? my next question is how will ye be tryed? will you be tryed by the ordinary rules of tryals of your preference in other cases: answer me then, or call your souls to answer themselves in some few questions: What do you most delight to hear of? what do you please your selves most in? what do you imploy your selves most in the pursuit of? what do you most *postpone*, and put behind in the motions of your lives? which do you most neglect for the other? *&c.*

1. *What do you most delight to hear of?* The loves of Christ are not the objects of any sense but the *Ear*, but they may be heard of. Sermons should be principally such discourses; discourses of Christs love; *we preach Christ Crucified*, canst thou be patient to hear discourses of the loves of Women, discourses of worldly businesses of vanity, many hours, and canst thou not with the like patience and delight sit out a Sermon of one hour? art thou never saying, when will this vain, idle, discourse be done, this discourse that tends nothing to the good of my Soul, and yet often saying when will this Sermon be done? Judge then whether thy Soul judgeth the loves of Christ better than Wine? There are those that *can rise up early in the morning*, that they may follow strong drink, and continue till night, till Wine inflame them, and canst not thou rise up early to hear of the *love of Christ*, and sit an *hour or two*, till the report of his love inflameth thy Soul. Hadst thou rather hear a wanton idle story, than a Gospel story? how dost thou then prefer the loves of Christ before Wine; thou manifestly givest the preference to a sensual satisfaction.

2. *What do you most please your thoughts in the contemplation & meditation of?* My meditation of him (saith *David*) shall be sweet. Our thoughts must feed themselves with some objects; we are so incompassed with the straits and necessities of this life, with the various diversions, and temptations, that I think it unreasonable to put the tryal there. *Whether have the loves of Christ, or worldly objects most of your thoughts*, none would acquit themselves upon such an inquiry. But *which are your Souls most pleasant Bread*, which are your *sweetest meditations*? this will try a Soul; undoubtedly such objects as a Soul most preferreth, it will be most pleased in the contemplation of. But is this the case of the most of men? can they say, that though they have more thoughts upon the World, and sensible objects in it, yet the meditations upon the World, and the other are rather thoughts of necessity, than of delight and pleasure?

Thirdly, *What do you most imploy your selves in the pursuit of? Is*

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it sensible satisfactions, or Christs love, I do not here mean by [*most*] *a frequency of action, or length of time*, but a warmth, and fervency, and intension of affection, and a Christians circumstances, and station in the world may be such as will inforce him to spend more of his time, and more of his action about worldly than about spiritual things, but which doth the Soul press most hard after? which pursuit hath most of the strength and vigour of the inward man? That doubtless hath the preference in the mans judgment: it is an ill sign to see a man work hard, and pray coldly, lazily, perfunctorily, when men spend their strength for that which is not bread, when a man so toileth in his pleasures, when he presseth so hard after the World, that his whole heart may be discerned and read in those pursuits, and but half his heart can be discerned in his pursuits after the loves of Christ, he comes late to an Ordinance of God, he sleeps, when he is there, he doth the work of his *God negligently*. My Soul (saith *David* presseth *hard after thee*; it is an excellent sign, when tho the motions of the Soul be after the World, yet the *pressings* hard of *the Soul* are after Christ, and his loves.

4. *In the motions of your lives, what do you most* postpone *and put behind?* that which is most postponed, is least preferred, *Let my Tongue* (saith the *Psalmist*, Psal. 137. 6.) *cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not* Hierusalem *before my chief joy*. We have an English saying, *That meat and drink may be had, but work may stay*: it intimates our preference of meat and drink before *labour*, the end of which is chiefly to procure meat and drink. Do you say I must pray, I and my House must seek the Lord, I must hear that my Soul live, my labour in my calling, that may stay? It is a very ill sign, that the Soul prefers earthly things before heavenly things, when he postpones the means to obtain things heavenly, to the means for obtaining things that are earthly, when every trifling business, will turn him off from prayer, reading, hearing the Word. It is true, there is a time for all things. But when the Worlds time is admitted to jostle out Gods time, and Gods time is not reserved to him, and the worlds time never yields to Gods time, it is a very ill sign that *Christs loves* have not the preference in the Soul.

Lastly. *Which do you most neglect for the other*? Our Saviour telleth us, *Mat.* 6. 24. *No man can serve two Masters, for either he will love the one, and hate the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other*, the neglect of one thing to give place, or room to another, sufficiently argueth the *preference* of that for which we

make room, before that, by the neglect of which we make room for it. Do you neglect the world and the things of the world, to give room for the loves of Christ, and the means to obtain them, or do you neglect the loves of Christ, and the means he hath appointed for the gaining of them for the world, and the means you are to use for the gaining of it? But I have I fear said enough not only to convince you that the most men and women in the world are guilty of a *false judgment*, either judging Wine in the literal sense, or at least in the figurative sense, better than Christs love, but also to convince Gods own People that they do not sufficiently live up to, and practice what they profess to Believe. I might add another thing.

6. *Whosoever purchaseth Wine or a satisfaction from any creature by a disobedience to the commands of Christ, doth most certainly judge, that* Wine, *that creature, better then Christs loves.* The demonstration of this depends upon this, That no man or woman can truly say they love Christ, or groundedly expect that Christ should love them, that doth not keep his Commandments, or that wilfully, ordinarily, and presumptuously breaketh them, tho there none lives who doth not sin against God.

Use 2. I shall shut up this discourse with a word of exhortation, which must be *to a preference of the loves of Christ before* Wine. I shall press this exhortation upon you by some arguments.

My first argument shall be drawn *from the reasonableness of this; That a reasonable Soul should judge of things not acccording to any appearances from false representations, but as they are.* I have spoken enough to persuade any person, that believeth that he is not a meer lump of flesh, but hath a reasonable Soul, and that he is not a creature of this life meerly, but ordained to an Eternal Existence, and that the Soul of every man by nature, and his state is such as the holy Scriptures speak it to be, that the loves of Christ are more suited to his necessities, & his true, & real wants, than it is possible that any created comforts should be; now admitting this, what more doth become a reasonable creature than to judge them so. All other judgment is but fallacy, and deceit, and of all deceit, and fallacy, there's nothing so unworthy of a man as to cheat and deceive himself. Thus every Soul doth that judgeth any thing better than the *Loves of Christ*. Further yet there is nothing more unworthy of a man then to outlaw himself, and suffer his passion to domineer over his reason; the course of mans Soul according to reason is for his will to follow the *dictate of his understanding*, for him to pursue the things, which he judgeth

most

most excellent; and though in other things indeed man doth not so he seeth that which is better and doth that which he confesseth and judgeth worst, yet all this is passion, and so far as a man walketh or acteth thus, he acteth not reasonably, but this is but the first argument, and considereth them meerly as men.

2. The second shall concern you *as Creatures*: *What an indignity do you put upon the Creator to prefer the Creature before him*: Wine is but a Creature, Riches, Honours, the World and all that is therein it is all but a Creature. Christ is God over all blessed for ever. It is a mighty degradation of God in our hearts to prefer any thing to his loves. How can any man think that God should look upon that Soul that dethroneth him, and preferreth some of his creatures, yea of the meanest of his Creatures in his affections before him, how righteously shall God leave that Soul to the creature as its portion, that chuseth it, and chuseth it in preference to his loves.

Thirdly, *Consider what an ill requital this is of Christs love to you?* This argument now concerneth you as you are *Christians*, and believe that Christ in the fulness of time left his *Fathers Throne*, and took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the nature of Man. Christ in his love, his redeeming love to you hath manifested a double preference. 1. *A preference of your good to his own glory and manifestative favour from God his Father.* Christ indeed in his estate of humiliation, was the beloved Son of his Father, his Father in that time proclaimed him his only begotten Son in whom he was well pleased. But he had not those manifestations of that love as before he was incarnate. He was made a *curse* for us that the blessing of *Abraham* might come down upon us, he cryed out upon the Cross, *my God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?* 2. *A preference of you to Angels.* He took not upon him the nature of Angels, but your nature, now how ill do you requite this love of your Saviour in preferring a creature to it; how can we believe the Gospel, and all that it telleth us of the dying loves of Christ, and do this? Oh therefore let not this be the condemnation of any poor Soul that heareth me this day, let none of us incur the guilt of this Idolatry. God aggravateth the Peoples sin of Idolatry from this, that they said to a *stock* and to a *stone thou art our Father*; the more base and low and unworthy the object is that is preferred before another, the greater is the provocation of the preference. Let us then so live, so walk as by our conversation to evidence to the world, that the *Loves of Christ* to our Souls are better than all the Wine which the world can afford us. Let

us not break a divine Precept to embrace any thing which this World can afford us, in this we shall be so far from acting like to Christians, or Creatures, that we shall not act like men possessed of reasonable Souls. Let us in our hearts more thirst, in the Spirit after Christs Love, than the worlds imbraces, let us delight more in any reports of the love of Christ, any discourses concerning it, than in any worldly objects. Let us be more diligent in use of means to gain Christs love, than to gain the whole world. Let us be more satisfied in the enjoyment of any thing of it, than if we enjoyed all the World can afford us. I remember *Solomon* saith, *The blessing of God maketh rich; and addeth no sorrow therewith.* The Loves of Christ make the Soul happy, and mixeth no sorrow with that happiness. Wine is a sweet liquor, but it will intoxicate, in time it will grow flat, and acid, and there is no created good, but will at one time or other grow flat, & sharp, if the Soul be not drunk with it. There is a satiety in pleasure, riches, honour, there is a time when there will be no pleasure in them, when we shall be able to see no goodness at all in them. Let us neglect them upon the prospect of the vanity of them, and the vexation of Spirit that is in them before we come to experience their *vanity and rottenness.* I have shewed you a far more excellent object. — *Christs loves are better than Wine.*

Sermon XI.

Cant. 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth: For thy loves are better than Wine.

For *thy loves are better then Wine.*] I have handled these 2 Propositions, which the matter of these words affords us. I have now only further to consider, *the relation* they stand in to the *Petition*, considered as an *argument used* by the Spouse to inforce it. I have already shewed you, they are brought in by the Spouse. 1. *Partly to*

shew

ſhew us the reaſon why the Spouſe ſo earneſtly deſired theſe tokens of Chriſts diſtinguiſhing love, viz. becauſe ſhe had found them *good*, yea *good before Wine*, (as is the *Hebrew Idiom*) 2. Partly *as an argument ſhe inforceth her Petition drawn from the value ſhe ſet upon the love of Chriſt*. Each of theſe will afford us a *diſtinct Propoſition*.

Prop. 1. *That the ground of Believers earneſt deſire after the tokens of Chriſts diſtinguiſhing love, and neareſt communion with him, is their knowledge, and experience, of the goodneſs, and tranſcendent excellency of it.*

Prop. 2. *That it is a good argument, for Chriſtians to uſe in pleading with God for the choiceſt diſpenſations of his grace if they can truly tell him, that his Grace is very precious to them.* Theſe 2 propoſitions remain yet to be handled, I begin with the firſt of them.

1 Prop. *The ground of Believers earneſt deſires after the tokens of Chriſts diſtinguiſhing love, is their knowledge, and experience, of the goodneſs and tranſcendent excellency that is in it.*

I ſay their *knowledge*, of the goodneſs, and tranſcendent goodneſs of thoſe tokens of Divine Love. By *knowledge* I here mean no more then their *believing apprehenſion*. God hath in his word revealed the excellency of them, this revelation they have read, and heard, and God hath wrought in their hearts a *firm and ſteady aſſent to the Divine Revelation*: This indeed is Gods firſt work in the Soul, the motion of the *will*, and *affections* follow it. I added [*and experience.*] Experience is a *ſenſible evidence*. Knowledge is gained by reading, and hearing, experience by *ſeeing* and *enjoying*; knowledge conduceth ſomething to move the Will and Affections, *experience more*. The reaſon is, becauſe good things in the fruition, and enjoyment of them, do not alwaies anſwer our firſt apprehenſions of them, and expectations from them, but nothing can be imagined more potent to incline the whole Soul to any thing than *knowledge* in conjunction with *experience* juſtifying our apprehenſion. *As we have heard* (ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 48. 8.) *ſo have we ſeen in the City of our God*; when a Soul hath not only heard of the *Loves* of Chriſt, but its Eyes hath ſeen them, the Soul hath taſted how good the Lord is, this mightily engageth the *Affections*. Eſpecially if we further conſider, that whereas in all ſenſible objects called *good*, the fruition, or enjoyment rarely anſwers the report of them, or the apprehenſion of them which the Soul firſt entertained and apprehended: it is quite contrary here, the enjoyment infinitely tranſcends the notion and apprehenſion, ſo that as the *Queen of Sheba* ſaid to *Solomon*; *It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thy Acts, and of thy wiſdom, howbeit I believed*

I eved not their words, until I came, and mine Eyes had seen it, and behold the half was not told me, thy wisdom, and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard, 1 *Kings* 10. 6. 7. So saith the Soul, that *being justified by faith hath arrived to a peace with God*; Lord it was a true report that I read in thy word, and heard from thy Ministers, while I was yet in my natural state, and condition of thy *loves*, and the infinite sweetness that is in them, howbeit I believed not the words, until my Soul came to taste something of it, and behold the half of that *quiet, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*, the half of that serenity of conscience, and satisfaction, which the Soul hath from a peace with God, was not told me, thy loves far exceed the fame which I heard.

I shall lay the proof of this Doctrine upon these 2 Propositions, which have a natural rational evidence to every reasonable Soul.

1. *The Soul of man naturally, and necessarily knowing an object to be good, and wanting it in whole or in part to any considerable degree, doth desire it, and without such knowledge it desires it not.* It is a rule in *Philosophy*, we will nothing, but what to us appeareth good, It is our misery in our lapsed state, that many things to us appear so, which are not so, but they must so appear or we cannot will them. Three things must concur to make any thing the object of a reasonable Souls desires. 1. *An apprehended goodness in it.* That is, an apprehended Sutableness in it, to our state, or circumstances, if there be never so much *goodness* in a thing if we have no knowledge of it, no apprehension of such goodness in it, our will moveth not by desire toward it. Hence it is, that the *Clown* desires no *learning*, and the man of *learning and knowledge* desireth no *excess of gold or Silver*. Though there be a goodness in *learning and knowledge* Yet the Clown apprehends it not, so doth not desire it, and though there be some degrees of goodness in a great estate, yet the *Philosopher* and man of *contemplation* apprehends it no further than as it serveth for a *Viaticum*, a Travelling Penny to pay for food & rayment whiles he passeth through the world. And indeed this is the true reason why the sensual profane man saith to the *Almighty*, *depart from me*, and to Christ, what do I care for thee? for being under no conviction of his lost, and miserable estate, and possibly hardly believing that he hath an immortal Soul, or shall have any existence beyond this Life, he seeth nothing in Christ, or the loves of Christ, that any way suteth the necessities, and wants of his Soul; and, *Ignoti nulla cupido*, what good a man doth not know he never longeth for. 2. A Second thing, concurring to make the Object of desire is an *apprehended possibility* of *attaining*

taining to or enjoying what he apprehends so suitable, for the reason of man will not suffer his Soul to move towards what he apprehends *impossible to be attained*. Hence as no *Schollar* ever heartily desired all kinds & degrees of learning & knowledge so no worldling ever desired all the *Gold and Silver* in it. Hence it is also impossible that a Soul under an *habituated despair* should heartily desire the Love, and favour of God, which it apprehends not possible for it to obtain. 3. The *object of it must be somthing which the Soul wanteth, either in whole, or in part, either as to the thing it self, or as to some degrees of it, or at least what it apprehendeth itself to want*? Still apprehension is necessary, for *De non Entibus, & non apparentibus, eadem est ratio*. It is the same thing as to this motion of the Soul not to have a good, and not to apprehend that it hath it. for our Souls move according to their apprehensions; and this is the reason, none desires *being* (though they may desire the continuance of it;) the *healthy man* desireth not health (though he may bless God for it and desireth the continuance of it.) The Ignorant bold presumptuous Sinner desireth not the Love of God, the pardon of Sins; he thinks he is sure of all. Hence now it is that the believer *desires the Loves of Christ*, it apprehendeth them *good, possible*, and what *its Soul* doth *stand in daily, and further need of*, which *apprehension* is the reason why our Souls desire any thing, be it of what nature soever; we can desire nothing but what we must apprehend *good*, suitable to us in some of our circumstances, possible to be attained, and such as either wholly, or in some degree at least, we need.

2. *According to the degree of our knowledge or apprehension of the goodness of any object so are our desires after it.* This will justify itself upon experience in all other things, we do not desire them according to the degree of goodness in them, for then every man must desire the favour of God, Union and Communion with him, but according to the *degree of our knowledge, or apprehension* of such a *good*, as such. Now there are various degrees of knowledge.

1. The first and meanest is the *meer act of our Understanding*. which by the help of our *Eyes*, and *Ears* gaineth the knowledge of things, And thus the vilest of men may know that the Loves of Christ are good, yea good before wine, that is, they may have so read in the Bible, so heard from Ministers of the Gospel. And even this knowledge may produce in a bad man a desire after these things, proportioned to his apprehension. Hence such a man may faintly will, and lazily desire these things.

2. A Second degree of Knowledge is *Opinion*. This riseth a little higher, the man who thus knows that the *Loves of Christ are* good, doth not onely know it from reading, or hearing, but from *probable Arguments*. Nor is it difficult for a wicked man thus also to know that the *Loves of Christ are good*. Assoon as he can be made to believe that there is a God, and that he is the Fountain of Good, and that Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, and Equal with the Father, both in Essence and all Divine Perfections, his Reason will perswade him that there must be a Goodness, yea, a transcendent Goodness in *Christs Loves*. But while Flesh and Blood only revealeth this thing unto him, his Knowledge is incertain and faint, and he is subject to thoughts that he may be mistaken, and therefore though he may sometimes desire Christs Love, yet it is but by fits, and with incertainties, according to the Nature of the Knowledge and Apprehension he hath of the truth of the things.

3. A Third degree of *Knowledge* is *Perswasion*, arising from *Demonstration*. Now there is 1. A *Demonstration of Sense*; thus we know the Sun shines, the Fire burneth, *&c.* 2. A *Demonstration of Reason*; when we can conclude a thing from infallible Principles of natural Reason. 3. A *Demonstration of Faith*, which is the *Demonstration of the Spirit*. When men know things from the *holy Spirits* fully perswading them of the truth of this, or that, from a *Divine Revelation*. This is the *Demonstration of faith*.

4. There is yet a further and higher degree of *Knowledg*, that ariseth from *Experience*, being a *sensible Evidence* of the truth of what the Soul had before received a little of, from the *sight of the Eye and hearing* of the *Ear*, and more from the perswasion of the Spirit, and some Argumentations within itself. I say now that according to the degree of the Souls knowledge and apprehension, so are the workings of the Affections: This of desire in particular. Hence the desires of Believers to the *Loves of Christ*, must necessarily be the strongest: For the degree of the *Knowledge* and *Apprehension* the Believer hath of the goodness of them, is higher than it is possible any other Souls should have. Other Souls may have read Books discoursing the Loves of Christ, or heard Discourses of that tendency, or judge so from Arguments of Scripture, which may make such a thing probable to them: But none but these have any perswasion wrought in their Souls by the Spirit of God, of the Excellency of them, none else have had any real Tasts and Experience of them. *Knowledge* and *Experience* of the Goodness of any Objects being those things which move the Soul to desire them, and the degree of the

the Souls apprehenſion of ſuch Goodneſs and Excellency in Objects, the ground of the Souls Intention in ſuch deſires; it muſt neceſſarily follow that a good Chriſtians *Knowledge* and *Experience* of that Goodneſs which is in *Chriſts Loves*, muſt be the grounds of their deſires after them. There needeth no Scripture to prove this, it is evident to our Reaſon. Yet take the Inſtance of *David*, Pſal. 4. 6. *David* deſires of God *to lift up the light of his Countenance upon him.* Obſerve now *v.* 7. what made him prefer *the light of Gods Countenance to the Worldlings Corn, and Wine, and Oil, Thou haſt put gladneſs into my Heart.* Accordingly he tells us *Pſal.* 9. 10. *They that know thy Name will put their truſt in thee.* Hence you ſhall obſerve that *David* concludeth many of his Pſalms of Praiſe with Prayer. But, will ſome ſay, *If they have had experience of the Loves of Chriſt, why ſhould they yet deſire them? None deſires what they have.* This is true, if our Enjoyments were perfect, but there is an *breadth, and depth, and length, and breadth of the Love of God in Jeſus Chriſt*, an *heighth* which the Soul hath not taken, a *depth* which the Soul hath not fathomed, a *length* and *breadth* which the Soul hath not meaſured from end to end. It is true, we deſire nothing but what we want, either in whole or in part, therefore in Heaven will be no *deſire, That which is perfect will be come, and all that* which is *in part only, will be done away:* But we ſhall never be filled with the Loves of Chriſt till our Mortality be ſwallowed up in Life. I come now to the Application.

We may learn from hence. *That God muſt ſhew ſome act of Love to us, before we can ſhew any Love to him.* Deſires after the Loves of Chriſt, though ſincere, are the leaſt, and firſt, and loweſt motions of our Souls toward God. Theſe (you have heard) muſt ariſe from a *Knowledge* and *Experience* of the *goodneſs of thoſe Loves.* Now this *Knowledge*, this *Experience*, muſt be the Gift of God to, and the work of God in, and upon the Soul, yea, and that not in a way of *common Grace* and *Illumination*, but in a way of *ſpecial Grace*; for though a *common Illumination* may produce ſome faint deſires, yet it will produce no ſincere and effectual deſires, becauſe the *Knowledge*, begot by them, will be flitting and incertain, and attended with Doubts, Fears, and Incertainties. So as till the Lord by his Spirit hath wrought in the Soul a perſuaſion of Faith, commanding the Soul without diſpute to give credit to what he hath revealed in his Word, there will be no ſincere deſires in the Soul after theſe things. The Schoolmen tell us there are three ways by which we gain the Know- Uſe 1.

Knowledge of a thing. By *Signs, Conjectures*, and *Effects*, (as some Causes are known.) 2. By *the enquiry of our Reason into the nature of it*. 3. By *Divine Revelation*. The *Excellency of the Loves of Christ* is a spiritual thing, and to be judged upon Spiritual accounts, and in a Spiritual manner. *The natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. So as the natural Reason of a Man will serve him very little to the gaining of this Knowledge, by the *Effects*, having never experienced it he cannot know it; so as there is no other way to know it but by *Divine Revelation*, *God* (saith the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10.) *hath revealed them to us by his Spirit*. And *v.* 12. *We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given us of God*. So as that I say God must shew some special token of his Love to our Souls for good, before we can shew any Love to him, or make so much as one step toward him.

Use 2. Observe from hence, *That a Believers Soul moves rationally and accountably enough in all its desires after the Loves of Christ*. The Souls of Believers are not so unintelligible as some prophane Persons would make them in their Passions for, and Motions towards Christs Loves. The *Knowledge* a Soul hath, or the Experience which it hath had of the Goodness and Excellency of any Object, moves the reasonable Soul to the desires of it. Admitting the Believer to see things in another Light than a natural Man hath, or can see in, to have other Notions of *Good* and *Evil*, and to take the measures of them from their subserviency to the Spiritual and eternal good of the Soul; the Passions and Desires of his Soul after Christs Love, are as natural Motions of the reasonable Souls, as the Worldlings Desires after Riches, or the sensual Mans Passions for such things as gratifie the sensitive Appetite. The Reason why every Soul moveth not after these Spiritual Things, is because every Soul seeth not the Good and Excellency in them. Multitudes hardly know (that is, believe) they have immortal Souls that shall outlive their Bodies in a state of Happiness or Misery; or if they know or believe that, yet they do not believe *that there is no other name under Heaven by which they can be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*: Nor ever had any experience of the Love of God to Souls. Their deriding of Religious Passions, and the Breathings of pious Souls after the Manifestations of Divine Love, flows from their ignorance of them, and their unreasonable Rudeness, in speaking evil of the things which they know not. The original difference betwixt a person truly pi-

ous,

ous, and panting after the Love of Christ and others, lies here: These Creatures know that they have Souls, Souls ordained to an eternal existence, either in Hell, or Heaven, in eternal Happiness, or in eternal Misery. They believe what God hath said, that there is no other Name under Heaven by which Men and Women can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ, neither is there Salvation in any other. That he that believeth on him is not condemned, and he that believeth not is damned already, the Wrath of God abideth on him, and he shall never see Life; they do not only read these things in their Bibles, and hear them from their Preachers, but the Holy Spirit of God hath firmly perswaded them, that they do as fixedly believe them, as they do any thing of sensible or rational Demonstration; they have more waky thoughts, with reference to Death; Mortality and Eternity, are things more in their Eyes than in the Eyes of others: Again, they have tasted and experienced more of the Love of Christ. Allow the Souls of others to be in the same Circumstances, they would have alike Motions; but because they are *ignorant*, knowing nothing of Spiritual Things, or at least nothing as they ought to know it, thence it is that their Souls move not; this is now but the natural working of reasonable Souls in other cases, nor is there any such unaccountable, or unintelligible thing in it.

And indeed this gives us the true Reason why every *unregenerate Soul is so cold in its motions toward Christ*, and also may inform us *how far it is possible such a Soul may go in motions of this nature.* The Reason why such a Soul moves no more, is want of Evidence, which such a Soul hath of the *Goodness* of his *Love*. Simple Goodness, and Excellency in an Object, is not attractive of the Soul, but *Goodness apprehended by, evidenced*, and appearing to us. All the apprehension that it is possible, a natural man should have of the Loves of Christ, must be from *Reading*, *Hearing*, or its own *Reasoning* and *concluding* from what it hath so heard, or read; for it wants both the demonstrative perswasion of the Holy Spirit, and also any experimental Tasts or sensible Evidence. All *Knowledge* which hath no better Foundation, will arise no higher than to beget in the Soul an Opinion, and leaves the Soul at some Incertainties, and unfixed, and hence its Motions towards an Object of which it hath no better Evidence, are also incertain and faint, and fluctuating. Knowledge being the Foundation of Desire, Reason will tell us that the *Desire* must bear proportion with the Knowledge. The unregenerate man, having

Use 3.

having no *Knowledge of Spiritual things*, that is productive of more than an *Opinion*, the desire must be incertain and faint, according to the nature of the *Opinion* that causeth it.

Use 4. By this also Christians may be able to take some Measures, and make up some Judgments of themselves, whether the desires they find in their Souls after *Christ*, and his *Loves*, be such as are *peculiar to the Souls of Believers*, yea or no. We usually say that *Desires after Grace are Evidences of it*, and there is a truth in it, but all desires are not so; for as I have said, there may be *desires after Christ* and *his Loves*, in an unregenerate Man, commensurate to that knowledge which he hath of the Goodness of them; but this will speak nothing of good to the Soul, only such *Desires*, as flow from a Christians *Knowledge of Faith*, and *from Experience*. He that hath only a *knowledge* of *Christ* and his *Loves*, from Reading the word, or from the *Report of Ministers*, may so far desire Christs Loves, as may serve him for his *own ends*, nay though he hath no great *Faith* as to that eternal State of Happiness to which Christ brings the Soul, but hath only received Notions of such ablessed State, to which he gives no great credit, yet for his own Security, because his notions may be true, though he hath no great fixed persuasion of them, he may yet desire the *Loves of Christ* so far as to bring him to an everlasting Happiness. As a Merchant that hath heard a Report of the rare Commodities, and cheapness of them, in a Country, which Report he doth not so far believe, as he will adventure an Hundred Pounds to try the Issue, yet may desire the Commodities at such Rates as he hears of; so may an unregenerate man that hath sate under the Preaching of the Gospel, and heard abundantly of the Excellency of Christ, and the rare effects of his Love, though he will not do any thing toward the obtaining them, yet may wish that Christ loved him, that he might be made partaker of such Love, though all this while in Heart he believeth little or nothing. That you may not therefore deceive your selves in this point, take a few notes of such desires as are indeed Evidences of Grace.

1. They are not *meer velleities*, *lazy wishings*, and *wouldings* as we say, *but alwaies attended with the* use of means *which we judge or find proper to obtain our desires*. And indeed this alone without any thing further said, will try this issue; a desire arising from the *knowledge* and *experience* a Soul hath of the goodness of an Object is alwaies attended with the use of what means are within our reach for the obtaining of it. Hence a Souls pretended desire of *the pardon of*

sin

sin through the blood of Christ, and of living with Christ in glory, not conjoined with fervent prayers, with an *endeavour* to reform our lives, and to sin no more, is of no good *significancy* at all. It is only an indication, that the man or woman would be happy, and secure as to eternity (if there be such a thing which he hath heard;) but now when these desires are attended, with sad reflections upon our selves for sin, serious indeavours against sin, and hearty and fervent prayers to God for pardon, these things speak the truth, and sincerity of our desires.

2. *Desires* upon *knowledge* and *experience* of the *goodness* of a thing are always most *intense*, and *strongest*. If you observe it, the desires of our Souls are augmented from a double cause 1. *The certainty of our knowledge of that goodness which is in the thing desired.* 2. *The quickness of our apprehension of the want of it*: The more full, and certain knowledge that we have of the goodness and excellency of an Object the more we desire it. For I told you before it is not the simple goodness, and excellency of a thing that draweth out our Souls after it, but our apprehension of such a goodness, hence in reason it must follow that the desire must be strongest in that Soul, where the *apprehension* is most full and certain. And all goodness being measured by us by the suitableness of the thing to our wants, the *quicker* and *fuller* apprehensions the Soul hath of its wants of Christ love, the stronger must the souls motions for, and towards it be. Now the believing Soul, having the most certain knowledge of the goodness of the *Loves of Christ*, and having also the fullest, and quickest apprehension of its wants of them, of necessity its pantings after them must be most intense, and strong; *As the Hart panteth after the Water Brooks* (as *David* speaketh, *Psal.* 42. 1.) Hence it is that when the Prayers of Hypocrites are but complementings of God, a few words of course, the prayers of the Saints are *wrestlings with God* (as *Jacobs* prayer is stiled) *strong cries, and groans which cannot be uttered* (as the Apostle speaketh, *Rom.* 8.) where any Soul findeth such *desires* as these, it hath reason to rejoice, and be comforted concerning the truth of its grace, tho it findeth its *actions imperfect*, and Gods manifestations of himself to it in consolatory influences not so full. In this sense it is true, that desires of grace, are indications of it, provided they be such desires, as flow from a *knowledge*, or any *experience of Divine Love*, I mean a *knowledge of Faith*, a certain firm persuasion wrought in the heart of that goodness and excellency that is in Christ, and his loves, not a meer knowledge from report, and the

credit

credit of others, but such desires can never admit of a regardless care'lesness, whether the Soul obtaineth what it desireth or no, but will be attended, with an inquiry after, and a due use of all means for the obtaining the thing desired. And besides, they will alwaies be *strong desires* according to the nature of the good desired, and the apprehended degree of the Souls want of it; and hence again: The Soul that hath these *true desires*, will find them attended with *trouble* and *unquietness* till *it hath in some measure at least obtained the thing* which it desireth, for as the wise man saith of *Hope* (so it is true of desire) *deferred it maketh the heart sick*. The Soul filled with desires is like the Woman in Travel, pained till it obtaineth the thing desired. *As when the desire is accomplished, it is sweet to the Soul*, Prov. 13. 19. So while it is accomplished, there must be some bitterness, and uneasiness in the Soul. But now desires after Christ and his loves, attended with no trouble, no uneasiness for want of the accomplishment and obtaining of them, faint and cold, and languid desires without the use of means within, our power to obtain the thing desired are of no significancy as to a truth of grace. *Solomon* hath two sayings in his *Proverbs* that may be applyed here. *Prov.* 13. 4. *The Soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing, but the Soul of the diligent shall be made fat.* And *Prov.* 21. 25. *The desire of the slothful killeth him, for he refuseth to labour.* Two things are said of the *slothful sluggard*. 1. That he *desireth* and *hath nothing*, he never obtaineth his desire. 2. *That his desires kill him*, they do him hurt, no good; what is the reason? *Because he refuseth to labour: But the Soul of the diligent is made fat. Solomon* speaketh as to the things of this Life, *The Soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing*. It is as true as to Spiritual things, the *Grace of God*, the *Loves of Christ*. The Souls of *Sluggards*, that will sometimes say, O that I had my part in Christ, O that my Iniquities might be pardoned, O that I might live with God in Glory, *&c.* but never will do any thing toward these things, not so much as deny themselves in a Lust, nor keep under their Body, and bring it into Subjection in any thing; these Souls *have nothing*. The truth is they have nothing of any *true* desire proceeding from any *sound knowledge*, or any true *experience*, but *they shall have nothing*. Their Desires *kill them*, if they trust to these *desires of Grace*, as *Indications of a truth of Grace*, they *kill them*, they cheat their own Souls to an eternal ruine, and destruction. *But the diligent Soul is made fat.* That Soul, that from a sound and firm persuasion of the goodness, and excellency of the

loves

loves of Christ, desires to taste, and further to taste of them, and is diligent in the use of means to have its desires accomplished, *that Soul shall be made fat.* That Souls desires shall be accomplished, tho it may see it falls short of its duty in the use of means, and tho it may be God is not pleased to give the Soul the sensible manifestations of its love, so that its *desire* is *deferred*, and while it is so differred, the heart is pained, and it meets with some trouble and uneasiness, through the not accomplishing of its desires to its sense, yet, *it shall be made fat.* The hope of the righteous (saith *Solomon*) *shall be gladness*, so the desire of such a Soul; the diligent Soul, shall be satisfaction. This is according to the words of our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. 6. *Blessed are they which do hunger, and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.* Thus much I have thought fit to add in this place in answer to that question, which we sometimes meet with, *Whether the desire of grace be grace?* A true resolution of it is of mighty use sometimes to Souls under *melancholick* distempers, or in *an hour of temptation* to relieve them, where they both want *sensible manifestations*, and a *just view of the sincerity of their own actions.*

I shall shut up this discourse with a *word of exhortation.* 1. *To all to look to their desires, their pretended desires after Christ*, and *his loves.* That of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. is a dreadful Curse. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be* Anathema, Maranatha, accursed till the Lord come. Love is the complacency of the Soul in an object, the first fruit of its *desire.* None hath a true complacency in an object, but he desireth an union with it in such a degree as he is capable of. Hence every one that liveth under the preaching of the Gospel, and hath heard of Christ will pretend to desire him. But one desires him from a *knowledge* by *hearsay* of the goodness of his loves, another desires him from a *knowledge of faith, a settled persuasion of it wrought in his heart by the Spirit of God*, and some tasts and experience of it; you have heard that the desires of the Soul which arise from a knowledge of *report* and *hearsay*, are weak and faint, and cold and lazy, and will speak nothing of good for the Soul that hath them, you have heard the other *desires* are *strong*, and *intense*, vehement and fervent, active and diligent. Nothing more relieveth a Soul sometimes, than to find in itself; that though it wanteth a strength to perform, yet to *will is present with it*, tho it cannot yet rejoice, and delight in the apprehension of his loves, yet for these are its desires. Nothing more killeth and destroyeth a Soul, than to trust to *desires of grace, as indications*

Use 5.

of it, which indeed are not so. O therefore look to your *desires* after Christ. See that they proceed from *knowledge* and *experience*. For *experience* indeed it dependeth upon *Divine influence*, and breathing upon the Soul, and the holy Spirit of God like the wind breatheth where it pleaseth. But see that your *knowledge* of the goodness of these loves be a *knowledge of faith*, not a meer *knowledge* from *report* and *hearsay*, as we may know many things of which we believe nothing; that is, we know such things are *written*, reported, talkt of, take heed this be not all the knowledge your Souls have of the loves of Christ. I have shewed you that the *Knowledge of Faith*, is a knowledge of persuasion of the excellency of the loves of Christ in themselves (for I am not now discoursing of the persuasion that you have a particular interest in them) a firm, setled, constant persuasion of the Soul, that the love of Christ is the most desirable good in Heaven or Earth, better than Wine, yea better than life itself. This is the work of the Spirit of God in the Soul. A man can by no study persuade himself of this, we can, by no art, no words, no arguments of ours persuade Souls of this. All that you can do, or which we can advise you to do in this case, in the use of such means, to the use of which God hath promised his blessing, or in the use of which God ordinarily concurreth with his blessing. These means are reducible to a few heads. 1. His *Word*. 2. His *Sacrament*. 3. *Prayer*. 4. A *reformed holy life and Conversation*.

1. The *Word* is the great means; he hath given you it in writing, that you may exercise your selves in it by reading, he hath appointed the *Ordinance of Preaching*, that you may receive it by *your ears*; neither *reading* nor hearing will beget in your Souls such a knowledge of Christs love as will be productive of this knowledge which I call the *knowledge of faith*, but they are both means, means within our own power, and with the use of which God useth to concur, and in the neglect of which, none can expect that the holy Spirit of God should work such a knowledge of the excellency of Christ and his loves, as will be productive of these desires after them. The Word of God is therefore called the *Word of faith*, not only because it containeth the substance of what we are to believe, but because it is that with the use of which God ordinarily concurreth in giving the Soul a *power to believe*, therefore the Apostle tells us, *That faith cometh by hearing*. If you would *know* Christ, and his loves, read, *hear the Word of God*, and that in a conscientious manner, but I have had occasion to speak of this under a former proposition.

2. The

2. The holy *Sacrament* is another means, at least for a further *knowledge of Christ and his loves*, I am not of their minds who think that the Lords Supper is a means for conveighing the first *knowledge of faith*, concerning Christ and his Loves, to the Soul; if it had, Christ doubtless would have given it in commission to his Apostles, not only to *go* and *preach to*, and *Baptize all Nations*, but also to *Administer the Supper to them*, which he did not if any will say, both *Sacraments* are intended, I shall not contend, but the Apostles practice expoundeth our Saviours precept, who *baptized* none till they *believed*, and made a profession of their true faith in Christ, the Sacrament is not a means for ignorant persons and *unbelievers*, to come to the first knowledge of Faith, but an excellent means in order to the getting a further *knowledge of Faith*, that is a confirmation of their *Faith* in the love of Christ.

3. A third means is *Prayer*. He gives his holy Spirit in all the manifestations of it to those that ask him.

4. The last I mentioned, was a reformed holy life and Conversation. None know the loves of Christ more fully and effectually then those Souls, who walk with him most closely. You know the promise of Christs manifestation of himself, is to those that love him, and keep his commandments, but of these things I have before inlarged in my discourses upon some former propositions.

Sermon XII.

Canticles 1. 2.

For thy Loves are better than Wine.

I Am now come to the last *proposition* I observed from these words, which I told you might be either considered, *As a Reason why she desired the tokens of Christs distinguishing loves*, (a reason drawn from her *knowledge* and *experience* of the goodness, the transcendent goodness of them. In this notion I have already spoken to the proposition arising from them, Or, 2. As an *argument of her petition by which she pleadeth with God, for the thing which she desired.* An ar-

gument drawn from the value she set upon his love. From whence results this proposition.

Prop. 10. *That our value, and estimate of the love of Christ above all other things is an excellent argument for a Soul to use with God for the obtaining of it.*

An *argument* is a *mean* brought either to *prove a proposition*, or to *move the Affections*. The *Logicians* bring arguments to prove the just connexion of *Subjects*, and *Predicates* in propositions. The *Orator* useth them *to move mens wills and affections*, the business of the Soul with God in any prayer, is the business of an *Orator*; the *Arguments* he hath to use, are such as may *move God* to bestow the good things upon him which he desireth. If you observe all the prayers of the Servants of God upon Sacred Record, you shall find them much to consist of Requests, or Petitions, and *arguments* backing, or inforcing those requests. These arguments you will observe drawn from several heads. Sometimes from the *Nature of God*. Sometimes *from their relation unto him*. Sometimes *from the promises made in the case*. Sometimes *from the greatness of their misery*. Sometimes *from Gods Power and the freeness of his Grace*. Psal. 25. 7. *According to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness sake O Lord*. Sometimes *from their faith, alliance to, and dependance upon God*, Psal. 25. 2. *O my God I trust in thee, let me not be ashamed*. So from various other heads, I say amongst others: *A Souls just prizing and valuing of the loves of Christ*, is an excellent argument for a Soul to use to inforce a petition for them.

2. The goodness or badness, the strength or weakness of an argument derives wholly from its *subserviency* to its end, its cogency, or no cogency. The *End* here aimed at is *by prayer* to *obtain* the loves of Christ, so as the goodness of the arguments to be used in this case depends upon the force they have with God to move him to grant the requests of our lips.

3. Persuasive arguments have their force either upon a *natural account*, and that is mostly from the infirmity of our Natures, which renders them subject to be affected with fine words, passionate expressions; we must not imagine that God can be moved with any such thing, and therefore fine phrases in prayer are very insignificant things: Or else upon a *moral* and *rational account*. As now amongst men, if one can come to another, requesting a favour from him, and say, Sir, *you promised it me*, there is a force in this argument, upon a *moral and rational account*, such an argument is this, in this case.

If

If a Soul can go to God pleading for the manifestations of his love unto it, and truly tell him, that it valueth his love and favour above all created comforts, tho the bare naming of this, and delivering it in fine, significant words will do nothing with God in order to the obtaining of it, nay though this affection and temper of our Souls, can merit no influence of grace from God, yet considering the perfections of the Divine Nature, and the obligations which God hath laid upon himself. It will have a great moral vertue, and efficacy, and be of great force with him for the obtaining the influences of Divine Grace, and the communications of his love.

Hence I shall desire you in the first place, to observe *what frequent use the People of God have made of it in their applications to the Throne of Grace. David* especially, *Psal.* 42. 1, 2, 3. *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God; my Soul thirsteth for God, the Living God, when shall I come and appear before thee, O God?* His Request there lies in the last words, *That he might come and appear before God*, the Argument he useth is from *the value he had for such a mercy*, so as the *Hart* did not more *pant after the water-brooks.* The same Argument he useth, and much in the same case, *Psal.* 84. 1, 2. The great Petition of that *Psalm* was for a liberty again to enjoy God in his Ordinances; what is the Argument he useth to enforce this Petition? *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts?* V. 1. *My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cryeth out for the Living God.* So he goes on in a variety of Phrases, all expressing but his *great value and estimate* of such a mercy, to th t degree that he preferreth the condition of a poor Sparrow, or Swallow to his own in the want of it. You have him using the same Argument again, *Psal* 63. 1, 2, 3. *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no water is. To see thy Power, and thy Glory, as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary. Because thy loving kindness is better than life.* The Petition is much the same, and the Argument the same. I might instance in many other places of the *Psalms*, but this is sufficient: And certainly this were enough, if no more could be said to justifie this Proposition. That Argument which the man according to God's own heart used, and so often used, is certainly a good Argument, and of due force and efficacy; but this was an Argument he often made use of. But I shall further shew you the value of this Argument from Reason.

First,

First, This Argument speaketh *Christ in the Soul.* What the Apostle saith in another case, *No man calleth Jesus Christ Lord but from the Spirit,* may be applied in this. No man can truly say that he prizeth the Loves of Christ above Wine, above all created comforts whatsoever, but from the Spirit; none but the true Christian, the truly spiritual man, sets any considerable value upon Christ's Loves. *To you that believe* (saith the Apostle) *he is precious.* Now what *Joseph* said to his Brethren of *Benjamin: Bring your Brother* Benjamin, *or see my face no more.* God hath said to every one of us, *Bring Christ with you, or see not my face.* We are all transgressors from the womb, and God heareth not sinners for their own sakes, but for Christ's sake; therefore we are commanded to ask in Christ's Name. God indeed as our Father by Creation may hear us crying for *temporal good things* in the day of our wants; so he heareth the *young Ravens when they cry for food to him.* But we are blessed with *Spiritual Blessings* in Christ, and upon the account of Christ; he giveth the *first grace* upon the account of Christ's *Intercession* pleading for the Application of the purchased Redemption. He giveth *further grace* upon the account of *Christ's* Intercession for us, and the *Spirit's Intercession for us: For we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh Intercession for the Saints according to the Will of God,* Rom. 8. 26, 27. Now a due estimate and value of the Love of Christ in a Soul, is an Indication of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the Soul; hence it must needs be an Argument of force with God; for *he that searcheth the heart, knoweth the mind of the Spirit, making Intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God.*

Secondly, The force of this Argument lies here, in that *it layeth hold upon many Promises.* The Promises are but as so many Bonds in which God hath made himself a Debtor to his Creatures. All Promises oblige the truth and faithfulness of those persons that make them: God being the true and faithful One, cannot lye; *He is faithful that hath promised* (saith the Apostle;) so that if it be a sufficient Argument to use with a man to obtain any thing we would have, to tell him, *He hath promised it,* it holdeth towards God more strongly, as his truth and faithfulness is much more certain and infallible than any Creature is. Besides that, it is a further advantage when Promises are made upon a due and just consideration; for

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those is not only the truth, but the justice also of the person promising is concerned to the fulfilling of them. Hence in Scripture you shall ordinarily find the Servants of God pleading the Word, the Covenant of God, spoken to, and made with them, *Psal.* 119. 49. *Remember thy Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope*; and in many other Texts of Scripture. I say, when a Soul can go to God, and say in truth, that he valueth his *love and favour* above *Wine*, above *Life*, above all created comforts, this Argument layeth hold upon several Promises of God. I will a little enlarge upon this: It layeth hold upon a *Promise of filling and satisfaction*, Matth. 5. 6. *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.* It is a mighty large and comprehensive Promise. To fill a Soul with the influences of Divine Love, is a very great thing. It is not easie to fill the covetous man with Wealth; but he may be sooner fill'd with Riches, than the Soul of a good man with the Love and Grace of God. But here is a Promise of being filled: *Open thy mouth wide* (saith God) *and I will fill it.* To whom is this Promise made? *To him that hungers and thirsteth after Righteousness.* Righteousness is *Grace*, whether you take it for the *Righteousness of Justification*, the Righteousness of Christ, in which every Soul must stand righteous before God: Or the *Righteousness of Sanctification*, habits and acts of Holiness wrought in us, and done by us, they are both from Grace, from the free Love of God shining upon our Souls. He that hungers and thirsts after it, is he that *intensely desires it*. *Hunger* and *thirst* are natural *passions* arising in us from our want of due *aliment*; nature inforcing in us a sense of that want, (and of all other) they are the most vehement. Hence our English Proverb, *Hunger will break through stone walls*; and experience tells us, to what hard things these passions have brought people, not only to eat Carrion, but to kill and eat their own Children; yea the flesh of their own Arms; so as *hungring and thirsting after Righteousness*, importeth vehement desires after *Grace*, which desires testifie the Soul's estimate of it, and value for it; and to those who thus hunger and thirst the Promise is made, that they shall be filled.

Again, such a Soul hath a right to those Promises of *all Grace* propounded in the *most large and comprehensive terms*, and general phrases; as where God promiseth a *new heart*, the *water of life*, his *coming unto Soul's, dwelling in them, abiding with them*. The Soul that can go to God, and truly say, that he prizeth the *Loves* of Christ

above

above all things, layeth hold of all these Promises of which the holy Scriptures are full, *Isa.* 55. 1, 2. *Ho every one that thirsteth, come you to the waters, and buy, without money, and without price, buy wine and milk.* So *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely.* Joh. 14. 23. *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* So *v.* 21. *He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to him.* These now, and such like, are general Promises comprehensive of all the Love of Christ to the Soul, in the various manifestations of it, according to the Soul's diversified necessities, with respect to its several circumstances. Now observe to whom these Promises are made, to *those that love Christ*, and in evidence of that love, *hunger and thirst after him*, to them the Promises are made, 1. That the Father will love that man or woman. 2. That both Christ, and his Father, will come unto him. 3. That they will manifest themselves unto them; that they will dwell, and make their abode with them. That they shall have Wine and Milk without *money* and *price*. Now I appeal to any ordinary capacity, what evidence of *Love* any Soul can give greater, than the valuing of his Loves above all other things. So that, where this can be said in truth to God, God is challenged upon a multitude of Promises, even so many as are made, to the Love of God, and Christ, and to the Soul's *hungrings* and *thirstings* after him. Nay, there is yet another sort of Promises, which such a Soul challengeth, *viz.* all those Promises of a further supply and increase of Grace to those that have the *Seed of Grace*: As *Matth.* 13. 12. *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have in more abundance.* I might add many more of like nature; but there is hardly any of you but know how to furnish your selves with them. Now where the Soul can challenge God upon a Promise, and lay claim to the mercy which it asketh, from an obligation which God by his Word hath laid upon himself, to give it: This is a great Argument, for it toucheth God upon the account of his Truth and Faithfulness.

3. Further yet this argument toucheth God as he is *a tender Father*. God (you know) to let us know his heart to his poor Creatures, amongst other names of relation hath taken to him that of a *Father*, to let us know there is in his *gracious nature* something *analogous* or proportionable to the heart and bowels of Earthly Parents to their Children, and accordingly our Saviour argues, that *if*

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any of our Children ask of us bread, we will not give them a Stone, nor a Scorpion instead of *Fish*, and thence concludeth, that if we *being evil know how to give good things to our Children, much more will our Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him.* You, many of you *know the heart of a Father.* To which of you would it not be a great argument, to draw you out to any acts by which you could manifest your loves to a Child, for your Child to come, and beg your love to it, telling you, that it valueth your love above all things in the world, that it had rather have your love, your heart towards it, than have all the estate you can give it? Shall there not be something in the heart of God proportionated to this affection in your hearts? Is it possible that a Child of God, should come to God, and in sincerity say to him; *Father!* I beg some tokens of thy special distinguishing love to my Soul, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee, and that my Soul doth value thy loves above all that the world affords, and Gods heart should not yearn, and his bowels melt towards such a Soul? God must say of the voice of such a Soul, as *Isaac* sometimes said, *It is the voice of my Son Jacob.* None but a Child can speak such a language.

4. Finally. *No arguments can be of more force to use with God, than such wherein the Interest of his own glory is concerned.* The Glory of God being his own great end, which he pursueth in all his actions, he useth a great argument to God, that saith unto him, *Father glorify thy self.* So gracious is God, that he gives us leave to fetch arguments from our selves, our own wants, and the misery we are in, which arguments affect God, as he is a God full of pity and tender compassion. But those arguments which we can fetch from the *Interest of his own glory*, seem to have a greater force, as complying with what is the Lords great and chiefest end. He that sets an high value and estimate upon the love of Christ, giveth God a great deal of Glory, preferring him to all things in the world, for God cannot be more glorified by the Creature, than to be in heart esteemed above, and preferred to the whole Creation. So as that Soul that goeth to God with this argument, doth in effect say; Father! my Soul hath glorified thee upon the Earth, and doth give thee the glory of being the most excellent object, and more desirable than all the world besides. Now therefore glorify thy self in manifesting of thy love to me, that I may further exalt thee in thy rich and free Grace. I now come to the application.

By way of Instruction, first, we may observe, *That the meanest* Use 1.

Child of God is furnished with a better argument to encourage his hopes in his addresses to the throne of Grace, than the greatest and proudest Sinner in the world hath. There are arguments, which Sinners may use, from the *infiniteness*, and *freeness* of the divine *bounty* and *goodness*, from *their relation to God, as his Creatures*, from *the greatness of their misery*, &c. and they may obtain something from God upon these pleas, from that infinite goodness, and compassion that is in the Divine Nature; but no *unregenerate man* can use this argument which hath in it a much greater force. On the other side, there is no the meanest child of God, not the meanest believer that is in the world but hath this argument to use with God. Other arguments may be of avail with God for the obtaining some good things of this life, this is of force for the obtaining those of highest consequence relating to the internal, and eternal happiness of the Soul.

Use 2. Secondly, This offers us a great incouragement to examine our selves upon this point, *Whether we have a due estimate of the loves of Christ*, Whether we can truly say to our blessed Lord, *That his loves are better than Wine*, and that we value them not only above all *sensual satisfactions*, which the profane scandalous Sinner doeth not, but above all *sensible satisfactions*, which no unregenerate carnal man doth. I remember when our Saviour examined *Peter* about his love to him, he propounded to him this question, *Joh.* 21. 15. Simon Peter *lovest thou me more than these*? I do know that many Interpreters by [these] in that Text understand *his other Disciples* standing by. There was a time when *Peter* preferred himself (as to his love towards his Master) to all the other Disciples: Tho (saith he) all should deny thee, yet I would not deny thee. *Peter* since that time was humbled, our Saviour had a mind that his humility should be manifested, and therefore (say some) he propoundeth that question to him: but I remember *Bernard* in one of his Sermons upon the *Canticles* puts another sense upon the words, *Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these*? and so it may be referred either to the *company* with whom he was, or to the *diversion* of *fishing*, they were employed in, or to the *great draught of fish*, which they had taken. I do but allude to the text, who so truly loveth the Lord Jesus Christ, if all the persons, and things in the world were before him, must be able to say, *I love Christ more than these.* Admit his friends and nearest relations to be in his Eye, all the pleasant and delectable things in the world, all the Crowns and Scepters, and honours in the world, all the Gold, and Silver, and Houses, and Lands in the world in his Eye:

Eye: He must be able to say, *I love the Lord Jesus Christ more than these*; yea if his own *life* be set before him, not to be enjoyed without the loss of Christs love, he must be able to say that he loves Christ more than that, Mat. 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me*, Lu. 14. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my Disciple.* But I have formerly given you some directions how to try your selves, whether the loves of Christ in the apprehension of your Souls are *good before Wine*, and shall therefore add no more on this argument.

Use 3. In the third place; This notion may be of great use to relieve Christians doubting *whether they have any one good Argument to use with God in their applications to him.* 2. *Whether any of their Prayers have at any time pierced the Heavens, and been accepted of God.* A good Christian is often doubting, whether he may go to God or no; whether he hath one good Argument to use, which may be of avail with God. We have many words to say, many *Arguments* to use; and when it is a clear day with the Soul, it can easily discern it, and fill its mouth with words of several natures; but in a dark day, under the prevailings of Melancholy, or boisterous Temptations, it can find many Arguments to deter it from Addresses to God, its own vileness and unworthiness considered with God's purity and holiness, the multitude of its sins, its former Prayers (as it fancieth) lying by not answered, but it cannot find one Argument to incourage it. But every Christian hath at all times many Arguments, if he could discern them. *David* made his vileness and unworthiness an Argument, *Psal.* 25. *Pardon mine iniquity* (saith he) *for it is great.* That's an Argument all have, and at all times. Ah! but (saith the Soul) this is no other than the vilest person hath: He may plead the *freeness of Divine Grace.* The Soul that goeth to God for Free Grace, can never want an Argument, but still this is common, and no more encouraging a Believer, than another man. We may *plead our own misery*, and sad state; misery is the object of *Grace and Mercy*; but still this is common. The vilest sinner may go and plead with God for mercy, because his state is miserable. A true Christian would have an Argument of a more special nature, and such a one as in the use of, he could go boldly and with confidence to the Throne of Grace. Admitting this Proposition, every good

Christian hath such an Argument; such an Argument as no unregenerate man hath, such an Argument as he may go to God with, with boldness and confidence: God was never yet wanting to the truly hungring and thirsty Soul after his Love; such an Argument as if pleaded with God, and being in truth, alwaies prevailed with God.

Use 4. I shall shut up this Discourse with some few words of Exhortation.

1. To all: To labour to bring up their hearts to this, to prize the favour of God *above all other things whatsoever*. How you shall know whether your *hearts be brought up to it or no*, I have before shewed you; but suffer me here to give you some Directions in the case, and to press it with some Arguments. Until we do find that our Souls do set such an estimate upon the Loves of Christ, we can never use it as an Argument with God. This is therefore the first thing which we have to do, to be restless till we find that we can say it in truth, that we value *Christ's Loves above all earthly things*. Nor will this ever be effectually done, till the holy Spirit of God comes upon our hearts with its impressions and demonstrations; all that we can do will bear no more than the notion of means in order to that blessed end. Of that nature much may be directed.

First, *Let thy Soul and its immortal state, with its condition referring to that state, be much in thy thoughts.* It is one great reason why men neglect and are careless as to the *Loves of Christ*, because they do not remember they have *immortal Souls*, nor consider any future state, or their own circumstances relating to it. Men know that they have bodies, and experience hunger, and thirst, and cold, and so are very busie in taking care what they shall *eat*, and *drink*, and *put on*, but they do not know, at least they do not attend to their knowledge of it, and have no certain knowledge and persuasion that they have *immortal Souls*, that can no more die with the body, than eat, drink, or sleep with it, so as they take no further care than for their outward man. Neither do they attend to the consideration of the condition of their Souls with respect to an eternal existence, but run away with presumptuous fancies that God will not suffer them to perish for ever; determining concerning their Souls according to their fancies, and the dictates of their own vitiated reason, not according to the revelations of the Divine Will; would men think more of their Souls, and consider the immortality of them, would they determine concerning them, according to *Divine Revelation*, it were impossible they should so far, as generally they do, neglect the

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care of them. They would quickly see that all the good things of the world could not affect the Soul with any good, and therefore must needs be invaluable things compared with those things that will secure the Souls happiness both here and for ever. If men believed they had immortal Souls, their reason would teach them quickly to conclude that they are better than the body, which is but earth, and which must return to dust and consequently whatsoever is *good for the Soul*, must be infinitely more good than what only serveth the necessities of our earthly part, and that neither but for a little time. But the truth is, as *the Fool hath said in his heart there is no God*: So he hath also said in his Heart, I have no Soul, no such immortal substance as Preachers talk of, there is no such thing as Heaven, or Hell; most unregenerate men are in their Hearts *Atheists*. The natural reason of all men teacheth them to look after their concerns and interests, and to prefer greater, before lesser interests, and to value what makes for their greatest interests, above what is only subservient to an interest of lesser value. Mens preference of created comforts before the loves of Christ proceedeth meerly from their ignorance, that they have Souls to look after, or at least unbelief of it, if they notionally know it, their not understanding the nature, and spiritual concerns of their Souls, or at least their erronious fancies and conceptions, of an universal Salvation of all, or all at least that are baptized; the first thing to be done rationally to possess Men and Women of the excellency of Christs loves, above *Wine*, above all sensual things, or any sensible things, is to possess men of this knowledge, and to keep their Eyes waking to the consideration of it, and to engage them to take their measures of these things from the revelation of the will of God, in his word, not from their own wild fancies, and ratiocinations.

Secondly, Possess your Souls *of the impossibility of their receiving of any good, any thing suited to their necessities, but only from Christ.* There is no other *name given under Heaven, there is no Salvation in any other.* The power over all Souls is committed unto Christ. The Father forgives Sins, but it is for *Christ's sake*; *as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you* (saith the Apostle) we have *Redemption, forgiveness of Sin through his blood.* In him we have *righteousness, peace*, through him we have *access*, an *entrance* into the *holiest of all*; the Father *hath given unto him Eternal life, that he should give it to whomsoever he pleaseth.* There is no good thing suited to a *Souls wants*, but it deriveth from Christ. Good things suited to the more external

nal wants of our Body, derive from God as the great preserver of man, and flow from that common providence of his which dayly worketh in the upholding and preservation of created Beings; but good things for our *Souls* derive from *Christ* as Mediator, and as they are purchased by his blood, so they are dispensed out by his Spirit. This now can appear to a Soul from no other light but that of *Revelation*, study therefore the holy Scriptures, meditate therein night and day, they testify all this concerning Christ. A full persuasion of these two things, 1. *That we have immortal Souls, ordained to an eternity*, either of *happiness or misery*. 2. *That nothing but the love of Christ can furnish them with those good things which are proper, and necessary for them, with respect to their Eternal Happiness*, are enough to convince Men and Women that the loves of Christ are *as much better than Wine*, and to be preferred to it, as the Soul is better than the Body, and the things suited to its wants, better than those things which are only suited to the wants of the outward man. But still I say, and every days experience, maketh it good, *Non persuaseris etiamsi persuaseris*, you shall not persuade Men and Women, tho you say enough to persuade them, though you shut up their mouths, and they having nothing to say, such a power hath lust in the heart of man, into such a debauchery is the nature of man degenerated. Admitting men to believe, *that they have immortal Souls*, and *that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God*, there is nothing in nature hath a fuller evidence than this truth, *that the loves of Christ are preferrible to all things in the world*, and a man cannot act like a reasonable creature in preferring any thing unto them; yet who believes it? who lives up to this demonstration? It is God *must persuade the Soul of this*, and till the Soul hath this written and ingraven upon it by the finger of his Spirit, it will never so Judge. Lastly therefore,

Pray mightily that God would *open your Ears*, to see this, and *persuade your Souls* of the truth of it, for till he doth it, in vain are mens persuasions. To move you to it, consider,

1. *This will bear some proportion to the love of Christ to mankind.* Christ loved us *more than these*, more than all the *Kingdoms*, and *pleasures* and *profits*, and honours of the world, yea more than his *own life*, yea he preferred us to the Angels, the fallen Angels, for he took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the nature of man.

2. This will speak the Soul to be a *wise and understanding Soul.* Certain it is (as I have already shewed you) *that the loves of Christ are good before Wine.* The wisdom of a Soul lyeth much in a *right*

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discerning betwixt good and evil, and betwixt that which is good, and that which is more good or better. The *excellency* of a Soul lyeth in its conformity to God, he is an Atheist who owneth not God to be the *first Being*, and to be of all Beings, *the most excellent, and perfect Being*. So as necessarily, that Soul that comes neerest in conformity to God, must be the most excellent Soul, now that Soul which acteth most up to the principles of improved and pure reason, and to the rule of that holy Writ, which we all confess to be the revealed Will of God, and liveth most up to the Divine Pattern, doing what God doth, that must needs be the most wise, excellent, understanding Soul. Now will not a little reason serve to convince us that Christ is the most excelling Object, and therefore to be preferred to all sublunary enjoyments? Doth not the Scripture represent him to us as *altogether desires*, as the *chiefest of ten thousand*, as the *well beloved of the Father in whom he is well pleased*, as he whom we ought *to love with all our heart, all our Soul, all our Strength*? Doth not the Father, the Heavenly Father love him above all other objects? *To which of the Angels said he at any time. Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee*; and again, *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son,--He was brought up with the Father, and daily his delight, rejoycing alwaies before him.*

3. *This will speak an heavenly sublimated Soul*, purged from the dregs of *sensuality* and from an *earthly mind*, a Soul *risen with Christ*, and seeking the things which are above, *Col.* 3. 1. The preference of *Wine*, any sensual satisfactions, or any sensible enjoyments to the *loves of Christ*, speaks a dirty Soul, that feedeth upon carrion, and can be filled with wind.

Lastly, *You have heard what an argument this will supply a Soul with in all its addresses and applications to God for any grace or favour*, no argument can be more moving, more prevailing with God, none that layeth hold upon more promises, or that toucheth God more as a tender Father. O therefore labour for this frame of Spirit, and give your Souls no rest until you find that they indeed do prefer the love of Christ before all other things in Heaven and Earth.

Secondly, This notion calleth to all you who profess Godliness, and to any thing of the *Spirit of Adoption*, *which teacheth to cry* Abba *Father*, to take *heed of a Carnal mind*, an heart cleaving to any created comforts in excessive degrees, so as for the enjoyment of them, or any of them to run the hazard of the loves of Christ; you will by it prejudice your souls in a great argument, which you might use at Exh. 2. Br.

at the Throne of Grace. There are amongst others, three distempers of heart, which those that would do much with God in Prayer must take heed of.

1. *A revengeful, not forgiving frame of Spirit.* It is a dreadful Text, *Mat.* 6. 15. *But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you.* Our Saviour hath taught us to pray, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.*

2. *A doubting and unbelieving frame* of Spirit. *He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him,* he that *lifts up his hands unto God,* must lift up *pure hands, and that without doubting?*

3. Thirdly, *A Carnal heart,* cleaving to the world, & preferring the things of the world, to the loves of Christ, & the good things of Grace.

3. Br. Lastly. *Is this such an argument of force with God?* Let then such as can use it in truth make use of it, I doubt not but I speak to many, who can in truth say, that they value the *loves of Christ* the tokens of his special, and distinguishing love above all earthly contentments; when you go to God plead this, take unto you words, and say, Lord, let me be made a partaker of thy special distinguishing love, thou knowest that my Soul valueth it above mountains of Gold, Rocks of Pearl, or ten thousand Rivers of Oil.

Obj. But possibly some may say, *This is to plead my own merit.*

Sol. I answer, no, for consider *who it is that hath wrought in thy heart this value and esteem.* Is it not God? Did flesh and blood reveal any such thing unto thee; thou dost not then plead thy own merit, thou only pleadest with God, from what he hath already wrought, and begun in thee.

2. It is but *the pleading of the promise which God hath made to them that love him and keep his Commandments.*

3. Neither dost thou plead thy esteem, and value for the loves of Christ, as meritorious, as thinking that thy prizing the loves of Christ, meriteth the further manifestations of them to thy Soul, thou only pleadest it as a gracious habit wrought in thy Soul, by which God hath fulfilled in thy Soul the condition of the promise; thou only beggest of God, that he who hath wrought in thy Soul that condition to which he hath annexed his promise, would now fulfil also that promise to thy Soul which is annexed to that condition.

Thus I have finished the discourses I designed upon the first Petition of the Spouse as pressed by her first Argument; *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth: For thy Loves are better than Wine.*

Sermon

Sermon XIII.

Canticles 1. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good Ointments: Thy name is as an Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee.

I Proceed to the next Proposition, which I at first observed from these words, which I then largely opened.

Christ hath good Ointments, which cast a savour, my meaning is (according to my former explication of the words) *That the Lord Jesus Christ, is filled with the graces of the blessed Spirit, which in themselves are as good Ointments, and whose excellency is discerned by every true Believer,* by every Soul that is *espoused to the Lord Jesus Christ* (to use the Apostles phrase, I have *espoused you to one Husband.*) Prop. 11.

For a further discourse upon this Proposition, let me first shew you,

1. What I mean by *Christs Grace,* and when I say he is full of the *Graces of the holy Spirit.*

2. *In what respects these graces are like to good Ointments.*

3. *What particular graces of the Spirit, are thus like to good Ointments.*

4. *Whence it is that they are discerned, and more effectually discerned by a gracious heart than another.* We read in the Psalmist that Christ was *anointed with the Oil of gladness above his fellows,* Heb. 1. 3. That he was *anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power,* Acts 10. 38. That phrase in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; borrowed out of *Psal.* 45. as I shewed you, is excellently interpreted by *John*: *God gave not the Spirit unto him by measure,* Joh. 3. 34. The *Grace* of God was said to be upon him, *Luk.* 2. 40. and he is said to be *full* of *Grace and Truth,* Joh. 1. 14. *Grace* in Scripture, as it relateth unto God, is usually taken in one of these two senses:

1. For the *favour, and free love of God by which a Person is accepted* of God, and so *Grace* is in St. *Pauls* Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians,* and in his other Epistles opposed *to works*; thus we are

Rom. 4. 4. Eph. 2. 5. Rom. 3. 24.

ſaid to be *juſtified by Grace, ſaved by Grace.* In this ſenſe it is alſo in Scripture applied to Creatures; Eſther *obtained Grace* (that is favour) in the ſight of the King, *Eſther* 2. 17. and ſo in many other Texts. Or 2dly it is taken,

For ſome *holy* and *virtuous qualities*, and *diſpoſitions*, by which (our Perſons being firſt accepted in Chriſt) we are acceptable unto God: Thus it is ſaid, *Joh.* 1. 16. *Of his fulneſs we have all received Grace for Grace*; thus *Love* is called a *Grace*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 6. and in this ſenſe the Apoſtle telleth the *Corinthians*, God is able to make *all Grace to abound to them*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. In this ſenſe we are commanded to *grow in Grace*, that is in *holy & virtuous diſpoſitions, or habits*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. It is expounded by 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Add to your faith virtue*; and to *virtue, knowledge*; and to *knowledge, temperance*; and to *temperance, patience*; and to *patience, godlineſs*; and to *godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs*; and to *brotherly-kindneſs, charity.* The Grace of Chriſt is taken in a double ſenſe.

1 Joh. 14. 16. Rom. 1. 7.

1. *Subjectively, For that free love, and favour, which is ſubjected in Chriſt, and being in him as its Fountain, floweth from him to our Souls.* In this ſenſe Chriſt is ſaid to be *full of Grace*, and *truth*, full of love, free love towards his Peoples Souls, and truly in this ſenſe *Grace* comes by Jeſus Chriſt, for out of him God loveth no Soul. In this ſenſe the Apoſtle wiſheth to the *Romans*, *Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Take Grace in this ſenſe, Chriſt is the *Subject* of it, and the *medium* by whom it floweth from the Eternal Father to the Children of men; he himſelf was from Eternity, *beloved of God*, and that both neceſſarily, and freely, being his Fathers Son, begotten from Eternity, the Father loved him, delighted in him; and indeed in this ſenſe Chriſt may be ſaid to have been the *object* of *Grace*, but he was not *anointed with this* in time, he had it from before all times, only as to the *Grace* of *Union*, the humane Nature, until Chriſt aſſumed it was not beloved of God, Chriſt aſſuming it, it became the object of this Grace.

2. But *ſecondly* the *Grace of Chriſt* is alſo taken *objectively* for that Grace which was poured out on Chriſt as *Mediator*, and this is either;

1. *The Grace of Union*, which is the free love of God *aſſuming the humane nature into a perſonal union with the Divine Nature*, in which thing God put a great deal of dignity upon, and ſhew-

shewed a great deal of love unto our Nature.

2. The grace of *Sanctification*, by which I understand not the same which the Children of God receive upon *Regeneration*, when of *unholy they are made holy*, of *impure* they are made *pure*, of *proud* they are made *humble*, &c. But those *holy dispositions*, and *qualifications*, which were found in Christ, considered as the Son of Man by vertue of the union of the *Divine Nature*, with the *Humane Nature*, and his *anointing with the Holy Ghost (not given by measure unto him)* by which he was not only acceptable to his Father as *Mediator*, but he is also exceeding lovely to his Saints. So that when I say *Christ hath good Ointments*; abundance of Grace; I understand,

1. *Abundance of free love which dwelt in him as God over all blessed for ever, to* be dispensed out according to the particular exigencies of all his Peoples Souls.

2. *Many gracious dispositions*, which eminently dwelling in the God-Head from all Eternity, were also by the Spirit, poured out upon the *Humane Nature* in his Incarnation. These are here called by a *Metaphor Ointments*, and good *Ointments*.

3. Because *by the communication of these from the Divine to the Humane Nature, in the personal union of both Natures in the Lord Jesus Christ, Christ was sanctified and set apart, and constituted as a person fit to be our High Priest* and *King*.

This (as I told you in my last discourse) was one of the sacred uses of Oil, which the Jews made, there was a sweet anointing Oil, made by Gods special prescript, for the consecration of the High Priest, the Tabernacle, and their holy Utensils; with this also they anointed their Kings. This did but typify the *anointing of the Holy Ghost*; and by the receiving of this *Unction* Christ was *constituted* our *High-Priest*, and *the King upon the Holy Hill of* Sion. By the Grace of *Hypostatical Union he was made so*: I mean by the union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the one Person of Christ. Christ indeed had an *Essential Kingdom*, equal with the Father by his *Eternal Generation*, but he obtained his *Mediatory Kingdom*, by vertue of his *Incarnation*, and *Unction*. *The new and living way was consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh*, Thus he was made *our High-Priest, our King, our Prophet*; and by his gracious *dispositions* and *qualifications*, he was made fit for a Mediator. *For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from* Sinners, *and made*

higher than the Heavens, who needed not daily as those High Priests (under the law) to offer up Sacrifice, first for his own Sins, then for the People, *&c. Heb.* 7. 26, 27.

2. The *Graces* of *Christ* were like *good Oils*, or *Ointments*, as *they were used in Sacrifice*, they cannot indeed so properly be called a *Sacrifice*, but they were as the *Oyl* poured *upon the meat offering*. There is a dispute whether the *Passive Obedience of Christ* only, or his *Active obedience* also, be *imputed to us*, and be *our righteousness*; not to meddle with that, supposing his *passive obedience* to have alone been the *Sacrifice*, yet his *Active obedience* must be allowed, as the *Oyl* poured upon it. The meat offering was usually *some Beast* or *Bird* slain, but then they were to come, and pour Oyl upon it. Christs death upon the Cross was his *offering*: That was the *Sacrifice*, but his *Graces* were as the *Oyl* poured upon this *offering*, had not he that died been *pure*, and *holy*, righteous, and separate from sinners, meek, obedient, *&c.* he could not have been accepted for others, for he must have offered for himself, as the Apostle teacheth us, *Heb.* 7. 26, 27. Thus his personal *graces*, and *perfections*, were like *good Oils*, with respect to the use of Oil in Sacrifice, upon the account of them it was that he offered up to his Father a *Sacrifice* for the Sins of his People, which was acceptable.

Thirdly. The *Personal Graces and perfections of Christ, were like good Oils for their sweet savour.* These perfections are those things which make the name, and person of Christ as a sweet smelling savour in the Nostrils of every understanding gracious Soul; what is it which maketh any Soul love Christ; what maketh its own private meditations of him, or the report which it receiveth of him, so exceeding sweet to the Soul, but these excellencies and perfections, which are in him: *His free, and infinite love*, to the Sons and Daughters of Men, *his pity and compassion, his slowness to conceive a wrath, and readiness to forgive, his freeness to heal his Peoples backslidings*, his *purity*, and *holiness*, his *patience* and *meekness*: These are those things which make Christ appear so lovely, and amiable to gracious Souls. Lastly like *good Oils, they serve the Soul for food.* What doth a Soul that hungereth, and thirsteth after Righteousness feed upon, but the *Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ?* (some indeed have found a *Righteousness* of their own to feed upon, but I doubt whether those Souls that feed on nothing else will appear *fair*, and *well liking* in the great

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day of the Lord:) Suppose a Soul pined away in the sense of its iniquities, what doth it live upon, but only the free Grace and mercy of God in the Lord Jesus Christ? As *Hezekiah* said in another case; *By these things men live:* so doth every Spiritual Soul make use of the Grace of Christ, and may say: *By the Righteousness of Christ I live,* by the love, pity, and *tender mercies of Lord Jesus Christ I live:* By *his fulness of grace I live,* for, *of his fulness we receive Grace for Grace.* Thus you see how upon all accounts, *The grace of Christ is like good Ointments.*

But thus much generally. We are upon a *Bed of Spices,* it is good for us to be here, let me therefore speak a little more particularly, shewing you particularly:

What these Graces of our Lord Jesus Christ are, which are upon all these accounts, as good Oils, or good Ointments. Qu. 3.

I shall answer this in several particulars:

1. *The Grace of Union, is as a good Oil.* There is a three-fold Union considerable with reference to Christ. 1. *His Eternal Union with his Father.* This is what he saith in the Gospel once, and again, *I and my Father are one,* but it is not proper to call this Grace. It was natural; his *Generation* who can declare? 2. The second is the *Hypostatical Union* of the *Divine,* and *Humane Nature,* in the *One Person* of the *Mediator.* This was *Grace,* the assumption of our Nature, to make one Person, with the Divine Nature, this was an *act of Grace*; it was not Natural, not Eternal, but the product of Divine, and free love in time. It was the *Grace* both of the *first* and of the *second* Person in the Trinity, to assume humane nature into an Union with the second Person. 3. *There is an Union of Christ with Believers, I in you* (saith Christ) *and you in me.* These are mysteries (the two latter I mean) not to be *fully known,* and *understood,* until Christs second coming. *At that* day (saith our Blessed Lord) *Joh.* 14. 20. *You shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.* That there is such a thing we know, how it is we do not know: but in the mean time this is also of Grace. This in the second sense is *terminated in Christ,* in the last it is terminated in the truly *believing Soul.* I am sure both are as good Oils. That *Grace* which was both from the Father, and himself considered as God, by which our Nature was assumed into a oneness with the Second Per-

Person in the God-Head. This is like a good Oil, this was the *sweet* anointing Oil of his *Consecration*, by this he Was constituted our *High-Priest*, capacitated to offer a Sacrifice to his Father, both *meritorious*, and *acceptable*. As God he could *not die*, as meerly the Son of man he could not *merit*, as *God-man*, he could do both. O this makes Christ exceeding lovely in the Eyes of a Spiritual intelligent Soul: Christ as God is full of *Glory* and *Majesty*; but his *Glory is invisible*, his *Majesty is incomprehensible*; but now *when the Word was made flesh, and came and dwelt among st us*, then as the *Evangelist* saith) *we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*. All the comfort of a Soul dependeth upon Christs Incarnation, and what he did, and suffered, as *manifested in the flesh*. *Oh!* how sweet this is to the Soul to think of this, together with the satisfaction, which by vertue of this, he gave to Divine Justice, and the *daily intercession* which he makes, together with the consideration, that in *this Capacity* he entred into the Heavens, *as our forerunner*; and we sit together with, and *in him in heavenly places* (as the Apostle speaks) are matters of exceeding sweet *Meditation*; upon these the Soul liveth, and supporteth its faith. The Grace of *Union* also considered in the last notion is exceeding sweet. This Grace is rooted in Christ, and terminated in the Soul. By this the Soul is consecrated to God, by vertue of this it is consecrated a *Priest* to offer up *Spiritual Sacrifices to God acceptable through the beloved*; by this it is comforted and refreshed, when it is terrified with the thoughts of the disunion with God, occasioned by the fall of *Adam*, and that separation which its daily sins make betwixt God and it: By this the Soul liveth its *Spiritual life*, for *Spiritual life* lies in the union of the Soul with God, which is made by, and in Christ.

Secondly, *The Grace of Love* in Christ, is as a sweet Oil or Ointment: That *holy disposition which is in him, by which he takes delight in the Sons of Men, willeth them good* with respect to their several capacities. *God is love* (saith the Apostle) *Christ is Love* as he is God, but as *Mediator* he is infinitely *full of love*; his pardoning Grace, is nothing but *free love* respecting a guilty creature, his *healing, restoring* Grace is *free love* respecting a backsliding Soul. *I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely*. He hath in him *comfort* for them that are sad, *strength* for them that are *weak*; now is not this *an Ointment that giveth a good savour*? I appeal to any Soul

that

that hath been *pricked at the heart for sin*, and felt the load and burthen of it: How sweet hath it been to a Soul to apprehend the Lord Jesus Christ as one who *pardoneth its iniquities!* How sweet hath it been to a Soul smitten with the sense of its *backslidings*, to apprehend Christ as one who healeth *backslidings*, and hath mercy even for the *rebellious* also! When a Soul is discouraged at the apprehended *difficulty of duty*, the *strength* and *prevailings* of sin, *and corruption*, how sweet is it to the Soul to think of Christ's strengthening grace, the Promises against the Dominion of sin, and the over-powering of temptation, *&c.* That we who of our selves can do nothing, yet can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us!

Thirdly, *The Righteousness of Christ*, is a good *Oil* or *Ointment*. There is a threefold Righteousness may be conceived in the Lord Jesus Christ. 1. *Considering him as God*; so there was in him an *universal rectitude and perfection of nature*. What is essentially good, pure and perfect, is the object of Love. *Thy Word is pure* (saith *David*) *therefore doth thy Servant love it*. 2. Considering him as *Mediator*, so his *Righteousness* was his *Active and Passive Obedience*: Whether both be imputed to us for *Righteousness*, that is another question, as to which I shall only say this, That the usual Objection, That his *Active Obedience was but the debt of his humane Nature, which was a Creature, and therefore could not be imputed*, is of no value, for his Righteousness was the *Righteousness and Obedience of a person that was God Man*, so had a surplusage infinitely beyond the debt of the humane Nature considered as a creature. Most certain it is, he had a *Righteousness*, yea and a Righteousness which is reckoned to us for *Righteousness*: his Name is, *The Lord our Righteousness*; and he was made of God for us *Wisdom*, *Righteousness*, *Sanctification* and *Redemption*; and this is a *sweet Ointment*; for by this the Soul knows that God hath said to it, *Take away that Soul's filthy garments, and clothe it with a change of garments*: By this it knows, under the utmost sense of its own unrighteousness, that it hath a *Righteousness*, wherein it shall *stand before God*, and its Sins shall be as if they never had been; by this the Soul knows that its imperfect duties, and short performances of the Divine Law shall be made up, through the more perfect performance of the Lord Jesus. 3. There is also a *Righteousness of the humane Nature of Christ*, which was the conformity of his Soul to the whole Will, and Law of God. There is no holy disposition required of any humane Soul, but was to be found in the

the Lord Jesus Christ. *Holiness, Meekness, Patience, universal Obedience*; now this also is a *sweet smelling Ointment.*

1. *As these dispositions render any Subject lovely*, any creature, though found in it more imperfectly, much more Christ in whom they are found most eminently. There is none but naturally loves one who behaveth himself blamelessly, in whose heart we can discern *no guile*; one who is in his behaviour humble, meek, lowly, gentle, patient, full of goodness; now these, and all other excellent Virtues being in Christ eminently, make him the excelling Object of our Love: Christ was *meek* and lowly, *Matth.* 11. 29. he was *humble*, condescending to those of *low degree.* He made himself of no reputation, *Phil.* 2. 7. Though he was *rich*, yet *for our sake* (saith the Apostle) *he became poor.* For his *patience*, he was led as a Lamb *to the Slaughter*, and *as a Sheep before the Shearers, so opened he not his mouth.* What should I speak of his readiness to forgive, his praying to his Father that he would forgive those that crucified him; all these made Christ an exceeding lovely Object.

2. But now Christ as *Mediator* hath not only these excellent habits as Ornaments for himself, but as the *Fountain of Grace*, to distribute to us. *Of his fulness, we have received Grace for Grace*, 1 *Joh. v.* 16. These are now Christ's *good Ointments*, for the savour of which the Spiritual *Virgins love him.* And that they may do so, it is necessary they should *receive the savour of them. At the savour of thy good Ointments:* So then, they must not only cast a *savour*, but the Soul that loveth Christ for them, must receive the *savour* of them. The last Question is; *How a Soul receiveth the savour of them?* I answer two waies.

4 Qu.

1. By *Faith*: I mean not here *Justifying Faith* (that brings in experience to the Soul, of which more by and by) I mean here only *Faith of Assent*; whose Object is the Proposition of the Word, to which the Soul fixedly and steadily subscribeth; So as the *Revelation* which is there, becomes as certain to it, as matter of sensible demonstration: For *Faith* is (as the Apostle telleth us) *the Evidence of things not seen.*

Secondly; The Soul receiveth the savour of these good Ointments: By *Experience* it hath tasted *how good the Lord is.* What *it hath heard* of God in his Word, it hath seen in the *communications of his Grace.* There is no knowledge like to this, and there is no Spiritual Virgin, but hath had less or more, some experience of the Lord's good Ointments. But I come to the Application.

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In the first place, this may inform us of the *Excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ*, what an adequate Object he is for every Soul to take a delight and pleasure in? It may be worth your observation, how the Language of the Scripture concerning Christ, is such as seems to court the *humour* of every Soul, to a seeking after a propriety and interest in him, by shewing him to have something in him suitable to it, that so it might take our hearts off beguiling Objects. Every Sinner naturally saith, *Who will shew us any good?* Good is the common Mistress of the World: Every one courts it. They only differ in their fancies and apprehensions of what is so, and court shadows and Chimera's. One saith, *Who will shew us any good?* That is, some way to get a penny. How shall we heap up *Silver as the Dust*, and *Riches as the Sand*, and joyn house to house, and *field to field*, until there be no room left in the Earth? Come unto me, saith Christ, I will give you *the Riches of Grace*, *the Riches of Glory*, Rev. 3. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tryed in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white Rayment that thou mayest be clothed, and the shame of thy nakedness may not appear.* What shall it profit thee (saith he) to *gain the whole world, and lose thy own Soul?* Another man he cares not for money, but for his necessary uses; but he *hunts after honour*, that is his good; he would be τὶς μέγας, some great person in the World; he would be led about the Streets, and hear men cry out; *Thus shall it be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour.* This man now looks upon Silver and Gold but as *white* and *yellow Earth*, and Sand, Idolized a little by a relative value some put upon it. He snuffs up the Air, and desires no more than a great Name in the world. Christ, to take them off this pitiful pursuit of the Wind and Chaff of the Air, the empty Air of *Court Favour*, or *popular Applause*, tells them, he hath *honour* for them. To as many as *receive him*, he *gave a power to become the Sons of God.* And if *Sons*, *then Heirs*, *Joynt-Heirs with Christ.* They shall *Reign with him*; They shall *judge the World*; They shall *be Kings and Priests to the most High God*, &c. There is a third sort that crys, *Who will shew us any good?* Their good is the *tickling of their Senses*, delicious Fare and Drink for their taste; fine Rayment for their touch; sweet Odours for their smells; *Musick* for their Ears, *&c.* Give them but enough of Wine, and Strong Drink, and Dancings, and dainty Food, costly Apparel Perfumes, sweet Ointments for their Hair, *&c.* and a few such trifling vanities, which perish with the using, and they have enough, let who will take Silver, and Gold, and Honours, *&c.*

Use 1.

Now that the Lord might draw off these sensual Hearts, he propoundeth himself as the object of *Pleasure*; he at whose *right hand* is *pleasure*, a *fulness of pleasure* for evermore; one who hath *Oils*, and *sweet Ointments*, *Wine*, &c. Thus he alloreth the appetite of every sinner, propounding himself as an object proportioned to it.

Use 2. In the second place, This *Notion* will afford every one of us a *Note* by which we may *try our interest in, and acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ*. The Note is this: If thou beest a Spouse of Christ, *thou hast a savour of his good Ointments*. Do the excelling graces of Christ, make him appear pretious to thy Soul? 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe he is pretious*. To an unbeliever *Christ is vile*; every unbeliever doth not speak vilely of Christ, but he hath a vile estimate of him, he judgeth vilely concerning Christ, he hath no esteem for him, he seeth no excellency in him for which he is to be desired; he can understand the value of any Gold, but that which Christ calleth *Gold tried in the fire*, *Rev.* 3. 18. He can fancy the value of any honour, except that of *being called the Sons of God*, he can tast any pleasure, but that which ariseth from a *Souls Union*, and communion with Christ. By this we may try our selves, what *relation we have to Christ*.

Use 3. In the last place, this Notion of Christs *good Ointments* offers me a fair opportunity to persuade *Men and Women of pleasure, Vain, Christless, careless Souls, to endeavour an acquaintance with Christ*. There is a generation in the world, whom pleasure enticeth from God and his ways, their temptation lies not in their Chests, they value not riches, if they have mony, they throw it away as dirt; it lies not in *honours*, they have no itch after great places, no, but it *lies* in the *cravings* of their *external senses*. Their senses itch, & they must scratch them & this is their undoing, & must be so, so long as the practice of Religion lies in self-denyal, and a mortification of our members. *They must drink Wine in Bowls*; and *stretch themselves upon their couches of Ivory*, and *anoint themselves with chief Ointments, and chant to the sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves instruments of Musick*. Give them but a few glasses of brisk, and generous Wine, and a *lesson or two* upon some instrument of Musick, with a foolish wanton Song: Give them but gay cloths, and a powdered Perriwig, a few patches, or a little paint for their faces, they regard not whether they have a peny in their Purses yea or no, and verily Pleasure

ſure is the undoing of many a Soul; the Woman (ſaith the Apoſtle, it is as true of the man) *that liveth in pleaſure, is dead while ſhe liveth.* As there are pleaſures, the meer uſe of which is ſinful, ſo there is ſcarce any kind of pleaſures, I mean ſuch gratifications of the outward ſenſes, as come under the name of *Voluptates*, but expoſe Souls to temptations to greater ſins, and indiſpoſe the Soul to the greateſt duties, they are Snares in which the Devil catcheth many a poor Soul. Now how ſhall theſe poor Souls, be drawn off from this, that it may not dance itſelf into Hell fire? Certainly by no means ſo effectual as the diſcovering to it, that as theſe pleaſures are pernicious, and dangerous to the Soul, ſo there are far greater pleaſures to be found with Chriſt. Perfumes often are but like paint to a Sepulcher; the body, the cloaths, by a little art ſmell ſweet, the mind and Soul (the more noble part of man) ſtinks (it may be through ſordid conditions) but moſt certainly in the Noſtrils of God, as being out of Chriſt; the Begger that hath been *anointed* with the *good Ointments*, mentioned in the Text, though he ſmells of the Dunghil, of putrified Sores, in our noſtrils, yet in the noſtrils of God, and of all Saints, hath a thouſand times ſweeter ſavour than the moſt coſtly perfumed Sinner in the world. O therefore come to Chriſt, that thou maiſt have of his *ſweet Ointments*.

And let this engage every Child of God to *ſtudy Chriſt more*, to labour for more knowledge of the Scriptures, for more experiences of the Grace of Chriſt. How often do we put a Box of ſweet perfume, or a flower to our noſtrils? How ſeldom do we meditate of Chriſt, or ſmell of his ſweet Ointments? Conſider, 1. *Hath not Chriſt good Ointments?* have not you had experience of them? Nay 2. Herein lies their excellency, *their ſweetneſs is inexhauſtible*; you have, it may be, taſted a little of the ſweetneſs of Grace, and communion with God, but ah! how little? Br. 2.

3. Laſtly, *The more your Souls are acquainted with him, and the myſteries of his Grace, the more you ſtudy him, the nearer you come to him, the more exceeding ſweet he, and his grace will appear to your Souls.* He that cometh too near a Box of Ointment, ſmells a worſe ſavour then at a diſtance; there is an ill ſmelling earthineſs in all the worlds ſweets, but the nearer your Souls come to Chriſt: The nearer fellowſhip and communion you have with him, the more exceeding ſweetneſs you will diſcern in him.

Sermon XIV.

Canticles 1. 3.

At the savour of thy good Ointments: Thy name is an Ointment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love thee.

I Have opened these words, and from them handled already one *Proposition of Doctrine.*

I now proceed to the second from those words, *Thy name is an Ointment poured forth.*

The name of Christ is an Oil, or Ointment poured out.

Prop. 12. When I opened the words, I told you a *Name*, is either a word or words expressive of the *essence of a thing*, or serving to distinguish *one thing from another*. In the first sense God *hath no name*. No word sufficiently expresseth the *essence of God*; *what is his name?* What is his *Sons name?* It is *secret*, it is *wonderful*. But so far forth as God, or Jesus Christ is by any terms made known to us, so far he is said to have a name. More especially I told you, that *Christ* as *Emanuel*, or *God with us*, hath several names: *Jesus, Christ, Messias, Emanuel*; these are all his names. 2. *Whatsoever Christ is made known by to his People, or to any Soul by*, that is his *name*, but that I may yet speak a little more fully, and distinctly, I will shew you; 1. What I mean by the *name of Christ* in the Proposition. 2. In what sense *this name* of his, is *like an Oil, or Ointment poured out*. 3. I shall prove it to you, and shew you whence it is so. Lastly, I shall apply it.

Q. 1. What in the Doctrine is meant by the *name of Christ?*

I have told you in the general, *those proper names*, whether relating to his *Person* or *Offices*, which the Scripture gives him. Let me instance in some of them.

1. *Emanuel* (or it may be more properly *Immanuel.*) When that *Ahaz*, *Is.* 7. 14. refused to ask a sign, the Lord graciously promiseth him one. *A Virgin* (saith the Prophet) *shall conceive*, and

and bear a Son, and thou ſhalt call his name Immanuel. The Angel gives him this name, *Mat.* 1. 23. The name it ſelf is Originally *Hebrew*, made up of three *Hebrew* words. עם אנו אל *El.* ſignifieth God, אנו ſignifieth *us*, עם ſignifies with, and thus the Angel interpreteth it. *Mat.* 1. 23. This is one of the names of *Chriſt*, and ſignifieth the *Hypoſtatical Union* of the two Natures, in the *One Perſon* of the *Redeemer*, and therefore *Piſcator* (I think) ſaith right that it ought not to be given to any Creature; *Cheitomeus* tells us it was given to Chriſt. 1. *In reſpect of his Perſon*, in which God was united with our Nature; and 2. *In reſpect of his Office, we have an advocate with the Father* (ſaith St. *John*) 1 Joh. 2. 1. *even Chriſt the righteous.* So he is God *with us*; that *is, on our ſide*, in that ſenſe, as the phraſe is taken, *Num.* 14. 9. The *Lord is with us, fear them not*, and Judg. 6. 13. *If the Lord be with us, whence is all this?*

2. I will join two other names together, indeed they are the ſame, only *one* is of an *Hebrew extract*, the other *Greek*; *Meſſiah* and *Chriſt*: the one cometh from the Hebrew Verb משח *he hath anointed with Oil*, and the Noun properly ſignifieth one *that is anointed*; χριστος in Greek ſignifieth one that is anointed: you have the ſignification of *Meſſias* warranted, *Joh.* 1. 41. we have, ſay they, found the *Meſſias*, that is, *the Chriſt*, and thus even the *Samaritans* underſtood it, as appears from the language of the Woman, *Joh.* 4. 25. *I know that when the* Meſſias *comes, who is called Chriſt.* The Jews were wont to anoint both their *High Prieſts*, and *Kings*, and *Prophets*, as you ſhall find in that one inſtance, 1 *Kings* 19. 16. compared with the known Text for the anointing the *High Prieſt* in the Book of *Exodus*; thoſe that were thus *anointed*, were in the *Hebrew* called *Meſſiahs.* The *High Prieſt* is ſo called, *Levit.* 4. 3. *If the High Prieſt that is anointed do ſin*; the word is there the *Meſſiah.* The ſame name is applied to *Saul*, the *King of Iſrael*, 1 Sam. 24. 6. The Lord forbid (ſaith *David*, when his men would have had him killed *Saul*) that I *ſhould do this thing to my Maſter the Lords anointed.* In the *Hebrew* it is *the Lords Meſſiah*, yea, and the People of God who have received the *Unction of the bleſſed Spirit*, of which the legal Unctions were a Type, have this name applyed to them, *Pſal.* 105. 15, *Touch not mine anointed*, in the *Hebrew* it is, touch not my *Meſſiahs*, but look, as though there be many *Antichriſts* (that is many that are enemies to Chriſt) as St. *John*

John tells us, 1 *Joh.* 2. 18. yet there is an ὁ Ἀντίχριστος, one special *Antichrist* to whom that Name belongs, & to whom that Name is as a proper Name; whereas, as to others, it is rather an *Appellative*. So though there be many *Messiah* many Anointed ones, to whom the Name agrees as a kind of an Appellative Name; such were the Jewish *High Priests*, & some, if not all their *Kings* and *Prophets*; yea and all the *Lord's People*, yet there was one to whom this Name eminently & most properly did belong, who was *The Messiah*: This was Christ. *Daniel* calleth him *Messiah the Prince*, Dan. 9. 25. *From the going forth of the Commandment, to restore* Hierusalem, *and to build it, unto* Messiah *the Prince shall be seven weeks*. And although the *second Psalm* literally respects *David*, an eminent Type, as well as Progenitor of Christ, yet by the Application of it to *Christ* in the *New Testament*, it appeareth that he was intended in it. There Christ is called the *Lord's Messiah*, against *the Lord and his Anointed*, &c. It is a Name which agreeth to Christ as he was *Anointed with the Oil of gladness above his fellows*, Psal. 45. 8. That is, *with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*, as it is expounded, *Act.* 10. 38. *The Spirit not being given unto him by measure*, Joh. 3. 34. *He was Anointed to Preach glad Tydings to the meek*, Isa. 61. 1. By this Name some think both Natures in Christ are expressed, as well the *Divine Nature Anointing, as the Humane Nature Anointed*. *Justin Martyr* thinks he was called the *Messiah*, not only because he himself was Anointed but because he Anointeth. This is how a second Name given to the Lord Jesus, and is (as I shall shew you) as Oil poured forth.

3. A third *peculiar Name of Christ you have*, Gen. 49. 10. where he is called *Shiloh*. *Jacob* in his last blessing of his Sons saith, *The Scepter shall not depart from* Judah, *nor the Lawgiver from his feet, till* Shiloh *come*. There is a dispute amongst *Etymologists*, for the Original of that word, some will have it to be derived from שׁ, which signifies a Son. *Until* Shiloh *come*, that is, until the Son of God cometh; or till *Judah's* Son come, which must be understood either of *David*, or of *Christ*: But I do rather agree with those who derive it from the *Hebrew* Verb שָׁלַם, which signifies to be a *Peacemaker*, a name very proper to Christ, who made Peace between *God* and *Man*, betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile*, and is therefore called *Our Peace*. This Name of Christ is also an Oil poured forth. V. Pagn.

4. A fourth peculiar Name of Christ is the Name *Jesus*. The *Angel* you know gave him that Name, *Matth.* 1. and gave also the reason of it, because he was to save his People from their sins; Mat. 1. 22. Luke 1. 30.

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he therefore came into the world, that we might be saved from our Enemies, and from the hands of all that hated us. When old *Simeon* had him in his Arms, he called him *The Lord's Salvation*. *Jesus* signifies a Saviour. These are some of his personal Names, every one of which is to the Soul as a sweet *Oil*, or *Ointment* poured forth.

2. But he hath a second sort of Names, which are the *Names of Office* given to Christ upon the account of several Offices which he was to bear; and thus he is called Our *Mediator*, Our *Advocate*, Our *King*, Our *High Priest*, The *Prophet*, *&c.*

First, He is called *Mediator*. It is a name you will find in the New Testament given to our blessed Lord four times. *One Mediator between God and Man, even the Man Christ Jesus* (saith the Apostle to *Timothy*) 1 *Tim.* 2. 15. The Apostle to the *Hebrews* calls him, *The Mediator of a better Covenant*, Heb 9. 15. *Of the New Covenant*, Heb. 12. 24. The Law was ordained in *the hands of a Mediator*, Gal. 3. 19, 20. *Socinus* tells us, that this word in Scripture signifieth no more than God's *Interpreter*; but the Word in the *Greek* is derived from μέσος *medius*, and signifieth a middle person, one who stands in the midst betwixt two offended parties, and appeaseth them. *Suidas* interprets it by εἰρηνοποιός, one that maketh Peace. A name excellently agreeing to Christ, who was *God-Man*: God with us: Neither God only (after his Incarnation) nor meer man. 2. Because being thus *God-Man*, he interposeth himself betwixt the *Offended Creator*, and the *Offending Creature*, and taketh up the difference between God and Man. This Name of Christ is as an *Ointment*, or Oil poured forth.

Secondly; He is called our *Intercessor*, and *Advocate*, Heb. 7. 25. *He ever liveth to make Intercession for us*, Rom. 8. 34. *He maketh Intercession for us*, 1 Joh. 2. 1. *If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous.* The Office of an Advocate is in a Court to appear, ingage and plead for his Client. Christ as an *Advocate* appears in the Court of Heaven for Believers, pleadeth their Cause, answereth the Accusations which Satan brings against them, interceedeth for them, *&c.* This is a *sweet Name*. This is as an Oil poured forth to a Soul conscious to it self of its manifold failings, and the imperfections of its best performances.

Thirdly, He is called a *King*. *Pilate* called him so in mockery to the Jews, and refused to alter the Superscripion of the Cross which had so expressed him. God calls him *his King*; *I will set my King*

upon

upon my holy Hill of Sion. He is called so not only with regard to his *Essential* Kingdom, which he hath as *God over all, blessed for ever*, nor *only with respect* to his Political *Government of his Church*, which is, or should be every where executed according to his Laws and Prescripts, but with respect to that special Dominion which he hath over his Saints, by which he doth both surprise their Enemies, bruising Satan under their feet, strengthening them against their lusts and corruptions, commanding them into a conformity to his Will, and to the practice and exercises of those habits of grace which he hath bestowed upon them.

Fourthly, He is called our *Priest*, our *High Priest*. The Apostle to the *Hebrews* calls him the *High Priest over the House of God*. The High Priest of *our Profession*, a great High Priest. The Office of the Priest was to *enter into the Holiest*, to *offer Sacrifice for the People*, to *pray* for them, to *bless* them. Christ did all this: He once *offered up himself for us*; he entred into the Holiest, whither *our forerunner is entred* (saith the Apostle;) we are blessed *with all spiritual blessings in him. He was* (saith the Apostle to the *Galatians*,) *made a Curse for us*, that the blessing of *Abraham* might come down upon us.

Fifthly; He is called a *Prophet*; that is also his Name: *That Prophet* (by way of Eminency) *Deut.* 13. 3. *Joh.* 1. 21. *Act.* 3. 23. The woman of *Samaria* perceived *that he was a Prophet*, Joh. 4. 19. He is a *Prophet* not only as he could, and did foretel many things to come, but as he *teacheth and instructeth his People*. This he did while he was here upon the Earth, going about, and Preaching in the Temple, in the Synagogues, in the Streets, upon Mountains, *&c.* but when he ascended up on *high, he gave gifts unto men*; he made *some Apostles, some Evangelists, others Pastors and Teachers*; for the continual building up of his Church; and not only so, but by his Spirit instructing them in, and revealing to them the deep things of God, the things *which Eye hath not seen, nor hath Ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive*. Now all these pieces of Christ's Name are to the believing Soul as Oil poured forth.

But besides these personal Names of Christ, and his Names of Office. *Whatever else Christ is made known by, is his Name*. I will mention but three things.

First, *His Word is his Name*. The Gospel of Christ is his Name, that expresseth to us what Christ is. Christ saith, that he had manifested his *Father's Name* unto the men whom he had given *him out of the world*, Joh. 17. 6. that is his Fathers Truths, the Doctrine of

of his Gospel. The Lord Jesus is made known by his Gospel. That doth the same thing for Christ, that our Name doth for us; it lets the World know whose Son Christ is, what he is, what he hath done and suffered for Sinners, and this is to the Soul exceeding sweet, as an Oil that is poured forth.

Secondly, *His Mercy is his Name.* All those declarations of his love and good will towards his Peoples Souls, of which his Gospel is full. All the Emanations of his Love. When the Lord telleth *Moses his Name*, he thus proclaimeth it; *The Lord, The Lord merciful, slow to anger.* As God gets him a great Name upon *Pharaoh*, and the wicked of the Earth, by *executing Justice and Judgment*; so he gets himself a great Name amongst his Saints, by shewing mercy. His Name is, *I, even I am he that blotteth out transgressions for my own Names sake: I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely.*

Lastly, *His Truth is his Name.* By Truth I mean his *Faithfulness in fulfilling his Word.* Thy Truth reacheth unto the Clouds, saith *David*, *Psal.* 108. 4. *David*, *Psal.* 138. 2. resolveth to *praise God's Name, for his Loving-kindness and for his Truth.* Jesus Christ is much known to us by his Truth and Faithfulness to his Promises, making good to his Peoples Souls, what he hath said; hence he is called the *Amen*, the *Faithful*; and the true Witness, *Rev.* 3. 14. *Pareus* (upon that Text) saith, that Christ is called the *Amen* for that reason which the Apostle giveth, 2 *Cor.* 1. 19, 20. because he is not *Yea* and *Nay*, but he is *Yea*; and because all the Promises of God in him are Yea and Amen. Thus I have opened to you what that *Name of Christ is*, which the Spouse compareth to an Oil, or to an Ointment poured forth.

2 Qu. *But why to an Oil poured forth?*

Certainly for the usefulness of it under that circumstance. Ointment in the Box, Oil inclosed and kept up in the Vessel, is no way so useful as when it is poured out. If we use it for *food*, it must be poured out, if for *Medicine*, if for *Ornament*, which way soever we use Oil or Ointment, it must be poured out, then it becomes useful to us. But that which I take to be what is principally intended, is, *Thy Name is exceedingly, infinitely sweet.* Oil is sweet in the Vessel where it is kept; it is sweet, if but dropped out by drops. But saith the Spouse of Christ, *Thy Name is as an Oil or Ointment poured forth.* Thou hast not only a sweetness and excellency in thy self, but all the grace and mercy in thee is communicated, and that not in drops, or little measures, but as *Oil* poured forth, that hath scope of Air

enough to diffuse it self in and by. If Christ had *no Name* by which he could be made known to us, yet there would be in him (as God blessed for ever) infinite *goodness*, as well as *Majesty* and Glory; the *fulness* of the *God-Head* would be in him, he would be *full of Grace and Truth*; but now his *Name* makes him to be as an Oil poured forth; by that *we behold his glory, the glory as of the begotten of the Father, full of Grace, and Truth*, Joh. 1. 14. When the invisible, incomprehensible excellency, love, and grace of Christ is made known unto us, either by the Gospel, or by the emanations of his grace and mercy, or the demonstrations of his truth, and faithfulness, by any of his *personal names*, or *names of Office*, which are *given to him*, then like Oil, or *Ointment* poured out, he appears to the Soul transcendently, incomparably sweet. This now appears both from *Scripture*, and from *experience*.

1. From *Scripture*; how sweet are thy words unto my taste, saith *David*, *Psal.* 119. 103. *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than Honey*, and the Hony-comb, *Psal.* 19. 10. *In his name shall the Gentiles trust*, Mat. 12. 21. *Adam had* a little of Christ made known unto him: One promise (we read of no more) *The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpents head, Gen.* 3. 15. It was like *Oil poured forth*, and kept him from a *deliquium*, in the sense of the first sin, and his being turned out of Paradise; *Abraham* heard a little of Christs name, it was to him like Oil *poured forth*, he *saw my day, and rejoiced* (saith Christ, *John* 8. he saw the *day star arise afar off*; he saw but the morning, the dawning of the morning too, of Christs day, and at a great distance how sweet was it to him? *He saw my day* (saith Christ) and *he rejoiced*. I might give you very many instances of the sweetness which the Saints of God perceived upon the several discoveries of Christ made to them. But what needs any further demonstration, than what ariseth from the *consideration of the thing*, and from the experience of any Child of God to whom Christ is, or hath been made known! how sweet must *rest* be to one that is *weary*! ease to one that is *heavy laden*? both these are promised from Christ. *Mat.* 11. 29. how sweet must the name of a *Saviour* be to one that is lost and undone, the name of *Redeemer*, to one that is a Captive! The name of a *Mediator* to one that hath offended a potent adversary, able to crush him every moment?

2. I appeal further to the experience of every Child of God, even

even every Soul who hath tasted any thing of Christ, and who heth heard any thing of his Name, when a Soul is troubled to think, how often, how heinously it hath offended God; how sweet is the name of a Mediator, when it is brought to a sense of its sin, and apprehends itself lost and undone, how sweet is it to remember the name of *Jesus*, given unto Christ, because he was to *save his People from their sins*? when a Soul considereth, that without Blood, without a Sacrifice; there is no remission of Sin, how *sweet* then is the name of an *High* Priest over the House of God; who offered up himself once for our Sins, and having done so, ascended up into Heaven, and ever sitteth at the Right Hand of God to make intercession for the Sins of his People. How sweet to the Soul that is afraid lest its lusts should have dominion over him, is the name of Christ as a *King*, given unto him, because he is to rule in the hearts of those who are once subjected and subdued unto him. How sweet are his *mercy*, his *truth*, his *promises*, when at any time the latter are applied to the Soul, and the former any way made known in the Soul?

Doth any one ask whence it is that the name of Christ is so sweet to the Soul? I answer,

1. Because *it signifieth him, to be the fountain of the greatest spiritual good to us*; his name *Messiah* and *Christ* signify him to be separated, and set apart of God for the accomplishment of the great business of our Salvation; his name *Emanuel* signifies him to have Hypostatically united in one Person, the Divine, and Humane Nature, that he might be a fit Mediator, that he might die, and merit salvation for us by dying; his name *Jesus* signifies that he is a Saviour; his name *Shiloh* speaketh him to be a Peace-maker, his name of an *Advocate*, signifies him to transact our business in Heaven for us, his name of *High Priest* signifies him to have offered for us a propitiatory Sacrifice, to have made an atonement for us, to bless us, to intercede for us; the like I might say of his other names. Now if the name of a friend, who hath done some great kindness for us, be oft-times sweet, like an Oil poured forth unto us, how much sweeter must be his name, by whom we are blessed with all Spiritual blessings?

Secondly. Because *by his Name, or in his name, our greatest blessings are obtained.* How sweet must that *name* be to the begger upon the use of which, *all its wants are supplied.* Is salvation worth any thing? *There is no other name under Heaven by*

which we can be saved, but only the *name of Jesus*; do our Souls want any thing? *Whatsoever you shall ask in my Name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, John 14. 13. *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you*, ch. 16. v. 23. Is the Soul trembling under the sense of its guilt, doth horrour surprize it? do the terrors of the Lord distract it: a wounded Spirit who can bear? by the discovery of the Lord Christs name to it, in the Gospel, promises, in the mercy, truth, and faithfulness of Christ, it is freed from these. The discovery, the least discovery of Christ to the troubled Soul, is like the Sun beam to the weather-beaten and be-wildered Traveller, like the shadow to him whom the heat maketh faint, like light to him that sitteth in darkness, like life to him that sitteth in the shadow of death. How sweet is the discovery of Christs truth in his promises, the sealing of a promise to a poor doubting Soul? Every Soul that hath experienced it will say. It is like Oil poured forth.

Use 1. I come to the application of this discourse, *Is the name of the Lord Jesus so exceeding sweet*, like an Oil poured forth. Oh then *what is Christ himself*? It is *Origens* application; *Si solo nomine --- Quid ejus faciet substantia*? How sweet is the Oil upon the Crown of the head, when that which runs down to the skirts of the garment, is so sweet? Open all created boxes, admit that all their sweet qualities would unite, and conspire to make one compounded fragrant smell, distill all the odoriferous herbs that the Earth bringeth forth, mix all the sweet gums, and odoriferous spices of *Arabia*, and the whole Eastern part of the world: let them all make one body, and contribute all their delicious qualities, to the composition of one Oil or Ointment to please the wanton sense of a Creature, what would they all signify to one Christ? *Oh blessed Jesus; thou that art altogether delights, clear the Nostrils of vain Creatures, stopt with their own lusts, and the vanities of pitiful creature satisfactions, and contentments, that they may take the air of thy delicious names, and follow thee in the savour of thy most precious Ointments.*

Origen. in Homil. in loc.

Br. 2. Secondly, Is the name of Christ in this life so exceeding sweet. Oh *what will the enjoyment of Christ in Heaven be*? When the Saints shall *see him as he is*, when they shall be *ever with the Lord*, beholding his face, rejoycing in his presence, when they shall be at his right hand, where are, and shall be *Pleasures*, and

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fulness of Pleasures, and that for evermore; here we know in part, and see in part, and the greatest part of that we know of Christ, amounteth not to the least part of what we do not know; then the Saint shall *see him face to face*, and *know him, as he is known by him*. Surely we should cry out with the Psalmist, *Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts*. Here we sit but *under the shadow of the Apple tree*; yet it is with *great delight*, and his fruit is *pleasant unto our taste*; how sweet will it be to be within the arms of it? If a Garden of Flowers, or a Bed of Spices casteth a sweet smell at a 1000 miles distance, what will it do when we come near it? O you! to whom the name of Christ is as an Ointment poured forth, follow the savour of it, it will bring you to that place of delights, where your Souls shall be ever satiated, but never nauseated.

Thirdly, Observe from hence the difference betwixt a *natural carnal* man, and a *spiritual man*. The name of Christ is published in all our parts of the world. The *Gospel* is published, that is Christs name (saith *Genebrard* upon my Text) but the natural man discerneth no *sweetness* in it, he can smell sweetness in a perfume, but in the *name* of Christ he can smell nothing sweet. Nay what is more unpleasing to a carnal heart than the name of Christ? and there is reason for it, for to him Christs name is the *Lion of the Tribe of* Judah, his name is *a Judge*, an *Enemy*, &c. Br. 3.

In the second place, what an argument is here to persuade those that hear it to *labour for a discovery of Christs name to their Souls. To persuade sick and fainting Souls to make application of Christs name to themselves*: To all *to study Christs name more, to wear it upon their hearts, to meditate of it*, &c. Use 2.

1. To persuade those who know little or nothing of Christ as yet, *to get a knowledge of Christs name*; sweetness naturally enticeth the sense, and attracts the Soul, shall the incomparable sweetness of Christ draw no Souls unto him? shall the air of *Solomons* name bring the *Q. of the South* from the furthest parts of the *Earth*, and shall Christs name draw never a *Sinner*, invite never a Soul, to come and taste, and see how sweet, how good the Lord is? You that are enticed with the smell of a flower, that lay out your mony for *perfumes* of no value; will you have no value for these sweet Ointments; *Alexander* the great was said to have had such a rare temper of his body that it cast forth a natu-

a natural sweetness. I am sure there is an infinite, a transcendent sweetness in the Lord Jesus. O let the *Virgins love him!* Men and Women that are in a state of Nature, are in one sense *Virgins*, not for purity, but as not married to Christ. O do you love Christ for the savour of his good Ointments! Consider what a difference there is betwixt this Object of your Loves, and those pitiful Objects which your Souls are so hot in the pursuit of. One man's heart is after his Wine, another's after his Riches, a third after the Pride of Life. The Name of these things is like the opening of a Dunghill, which sendeth forth a stench; they bring up an ill report upon your Souls. Christ's Name is like an Ointment poured out.

2. What an Argument doth this afford to persuade *troubled, fainting Souls*, in their spiritual *Swoonings*, and *Deliquiums*, to apply themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Ludovicus De Ponte* upon my Text telleth us; *Oil is a sign of Peace*, it *healeth wounds*, it *nourisheth the weak*, it *feedeth the Candle with light*; *It exceedeth all Liquors*. Christ's Name is as *Oil*, as Oil poured forth; it brings Peace to a disturbed Soul; it healeth the wounds of a wounded Spirit; it nourisheth the weak Soul; it exceedeth all created Oil. O meditate upon this excellent Name. There is something healing and refreshing almost in every Name of Christ.

3. *Finally*, Let those who have tasted how good the Lord is, *study Christ's Name more*; meditate upon his Name, his Promises, his Mercy, Truth and Faithfulness more; wear his Name upon your hearts. There is no Christian but is subject to its faintings. *David*'s Soul fainted *for the Lord's Salvation*, Psal. 119 81. But he hopes in the Lord's Word. He had multitudes of perplexing thoughts, but in the midst of all the *comforts of God refreshed his Soul*. You that have experienced the sweetness of his Name, study yet a farther knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him.

Sermon

Sermon XV.

Cant. 1. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good Ointments. Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth; therefore do the Virgins love thee.

I Have yet something further to discourse to you from this Text. You have heard from it, 1. *That Christ hath good Oils, or good Ointments which cast a savour.* 2. *That his Name is as an Oil, or Ointment poured forth.* It followeth, *Therefore do the Virgins love thee.* When I opened the words, I noted to you a double sense of the term *Virgins*, each contrary to the other. Some taking notice of the term *Virgins*, as signifying persons in a single and solute state and condition, understand by it, *persons that are natural and unregenerate*, not yet by Faith *married* and *united* to this spiritual Bridegroom, intended in this Song, who upon the pouring out of the *sweet Oil* in the Preaching of the Gospel (which is part of his Name) are invited and allured to take a *complacency* in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, to desire him, to will and chuse him as their Lord and their Saviour. There is a truth in this: *When I shall be lifted up* (saith Christ) *I will draw all men after me.* But I do not think this the sense of the term: 1. Because I am not willing to interpret *Metaphors* used in Scripture into a sense different from all other Texts of Scripture, where the same terms are used. Now I do not remember that in all Scripture, *Heathens*, Unbelievers, Natural and Unregenerate men are called *Virgins*, but only such as are the Saints and Servants of God. 2. Nor secondly are they so, *they being married to their lusts and to the world*, &c. Upon which account the Scripture expresseth them under the notion of *Adulterers*, and *Adulteresses*; persons that are *filthy*, *unclean*, *defiled*, &c. 3. Neither can the Natural Unregenerate man be said (while such) to *love Christ*, *because of the savour of his good Ointments*, they are constantly expressed under the notion of such as *hate God*, and *hate Christ*. By *Virgins* therefore I then told you the Scripture generally understands the *Saints*. Indeed Professors at large in the Parable,

rable. *Matth.* 25. 1. are set out under the notion of *foolish Virgins.* But the *wise Virgins* are the true Children of God, *Rev.* 14. 4. 2 *Cor.* 11. 1. The Proposition then is this:

Prop. 13. *That the Saints* (who are *Virgins*) *love the Lord Jesus Christ for those excelling graces which they discern in him.*

In the handling of which, I shall

1. Enquire *why Saints are called Virgins,* so shewing you the propriety of the Metaphor.

2. *Whence it is, that they love Christ, for the savour of his Ointments,* and the pourings out of his Name.

First, Why are the *Saints of God called Virgins?*

Not because they are not married. The Soul of man will not be alone, it will be united to something; if it be not *united to God and Christ,* it will be *united to the world, to lust and corruption.* I say, it will not be alone. The same therefore that are here called *Virgins,* are elsewhere called *The Spouse of Christ,* the *Bride,* the *Lamb's Wife,* &c. *Such as are espoused to one Husband.* God saith of them, *I am married to you* (*saith the Lord.*) But they are called Virgins;

1. *Because they are free from those things to which Vulgar Souls are married, but which are not the proper Husbands of reasonable Souls.* God hath created man's Soul for himself, and its Maker only can be a *proper Husband for it.* A Soul may be united to other Objects, but they are not just Matches, they are not proper Husbands for Immortal Souls, that are Spiritual Substances, and under ordinations for Eternity. The most of Souls are married, but they are *unequally yoked.* For a Spiritual Substance to be united to a clod of Earth, to a little yellow Earth or Sand, is a very unequal match. For a Soul to be united to any *sordid lust,* any *sinful pleasure,* is a very unequal match. The Souls of Voluptuous men, of Covetous worldlings, of Ambitious men, they are indeed married, they have made a Covenant with their lusts, and with the world, and with these things; they eat, they drink, they sleep, they converse, they keep a constant communion, as the married woman doth, but they are all this while Adulterers and Adulteresses, because these things are not proper matches for the Soul of man; it is like the marriage of a Man to a Beast. Now in this respect the Saints are *Virgins,* not defiled with this adulterous Union; *they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ,* 2 Pet. 2. 20.

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Hence they are called *undefiled in the way*, Psal. 119. 1. They are *Virgins* with respect to any *Marriage-Union* with the *world*, or any *sinful lusts*, or any thing which is not a proper match for a *rational* immortal Soul. They indeed live in the world, and use the world, but *they use it* (according to the Apostles Precept) as *if they used it not*; they live not with the world, as the Wife lives with her Husband, delighting in it, looking upon it as their chief Joy and Portion; they make use of the world, and the things of this world for their lawful occasions (as the Man may use the Woman that is not his Wife) but the world is not that, which their hearts *cleave to*, or *set upon*, and in which they take a chief pleasure and delight. For their lusts and corruptions, they are not free from them, but their hearts are dead to them. Thus they are Virgins with respect to their state, which is not a state of absolute independency from the world, or absolute freedom from lusts and corruptions, but such a freedom from the one and the other, that they have no constant fellowship and communion with either.

2. Their Life is like the *Life of a Virgin, an hidden Life.* The Virgin hath her name in the Hebrew from עלם, which signifieth to hide, because she lived an hidden kind of life. Virgins antiently lay hid in their Fathers house, and there they spent their time, not in Markets, and Fairs, and places of publick concourse. *Dinah* made an escape, and there was (you know) a sad consequent of it. The Virgins life is most in her Closet, or in her Fathers house. Such is the life of a Child of God; they are called God's *hidden ones*; and the Apostle saith of them, *Our life is hid with Christ in God.* The Spiritual Soul spends most of its time at home, in its Closet, or in his Fathers house, where two or three are met together in the Lord's Name (this is their Fathers house on Earth) or else in Heaven. *Our conversation is in Heaven*, Phil. 3.20. *The world* (saith the Apostle) *knoweth us not.* The Children of God live, but the World understands not how they live; *they walk with God*: They live in Christ; the life which they live in this state, is by Faith in the Son of God.

3. *The Life of Virgins is a free Life*, free from that care and sollicitude which attendeth the *House-wife*. The Apostle telleth us, 1 Cor. 7. *The unmarried woman seeketh to please the Lord, but she that is married seeketh to please her Husband.* The married woman hath upon her a great deal of care and trouble; she hath *an Husband*, she *hath Children*, she hath *Servants*, she hath a *Family* to take care for; the Virgin hath nothing to trouble her, nothing to take

care about, but how to please her Father, who provideth for her what she hath need of. In this respect the Disciples of Christ are Virgins; God hath bidden them *be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and Supplications, let your requests be made known unto God*, *Philip.* 4. 6. He hath commanded them to cast their care upon him, assuring them that he careth for them, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. As the Father taketh the care of his *Virgin Daughters* upon himself, so as they need not be sollicitous, or trouble themselves with cares what they should eat, or what they should drink, or what they should put on; so hath the Lord taken care for his Children; and every Child of God that walks up to his Principles, and liveth up to his holy Calling, leadeth a life as void of sollicitous care and anxiety, as the Virgin in her Fathers house, whose only care is to please her Father. He is indeed careful to maintain good works but for nothing else; and thus as with respect to their state, so with respect to the way and condition of their lives, the Saints are *Virgins*. But further yet, they are, or should be Virgins, with respect to their Qualifications.

4. Virgins are *chast* and *undefiled*. Thus the Children of God are usually described in holy Writ. *I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chast Virgin to Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. They are called *pure in heart*, *undefiled in the way*; *they have not defiled their garments*, Rev. 3. 4. Indeed every married woman is not an unclean woman; there is a *marriage-bed undefiled* (as the Apostle speaks) and indeed as there is a matrimonial *Virginity*, or *Chastity*, so the Saints are such; for though they be Virgins, yet they are *espoused to one Husband*; they are married unto Christ. Though their hearts cleave not to Objects which indeed cannot be the proper Husbands of a reasonable, spiritual and immortal Soul.

5. Finally, *Virgins* are or should be *modest in all their behaviour*. She that hath lost her *Modesty*, hath exposed her Virginity to great jealousies and suspicions. The Children of God are so in their hearts, in their discourses, in their behaviour. But I have opened this Metaphor sufficiently. Now these *Virgins love Christ for the savor of his Name*, because his Name is an *Oil*, or *Ointment poured forth*. All these things are spoken in a figure, that figure which we usually call a Metaphor. Sweet things entice and allure our senses. Sweet savours are grateful to our smell. Thence it is that it hath been an antient practice for Men and Women to use sweet Oil, or Powder, that they might be more amiable and delightful to their Lovers: This you may know was an old practice, by that instance of the

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lewd Woman in the *Proverbs*, who to invite the young man to her Adulterous Bed, tells him, *She had perfumed her Bed with Myrrh, Aloes and Cinamon.* The Spouse making use of this vain and wanton practice, to express how pleasant and delightful Christ was to her, fancieth him as one perfumed with *sweet Odours*; anointed with odoriferous Oil, or Ointment. *Thy Name* (saith she) *is as an Oil, or Ointment poured forth*; *Therefore do the Virgins love thee.* That is, thou art possessed of many noble, rich and excellent habits of *grace*, which make thee to my Soul appear infinitely more sweet and lovely, than all the good Oils and Perfumes in the World can make one appear to the wanton sense of another; and for those excellent graces of the Spirit, by thee not received *by measure*, and for the pourings out, and discoveries of these upon the Souls of the Saints, and the discovery of them unto their Souls it is, That Souls freed from the pollutions of the world through lust: Souls that are holy, spiritual, heavenly-minded, desire after delights, and take an infinite complacency in the Lord Jesus Christ. What these excellent habits are; what this same *unctuous*, *sweet-smelling Name* of Christ is, I have already opened, in my former Discourse. Let me now a little further shew you:

Qu. 2. *What there is in the excellent Graces, or precious Discoveries of Christ, which make Christ so amiable to the Soul?*

1. There is in them an *infinite*, *inexhaustible*, *real goodness*. All good is attractive. *Who will shew us any good*, is, you know, *Vox Populi*; and it is impossible a Soul should apprehend any thing fixedly, as really and transcendently good, but it must be pleasing to it. Light is not more grateful to the Eye, than *Good* is to the reasonable Soul: And as our Eye is proportionably pleased with the glimmerings of Light from a Candle, or the counterfeit of it in a *Glow-worm*; so the Soul of man falls into the imbracings of good, when it doth but glimmer in a piece of Silver, or dissemble in a perishing pleasure. Nay, we are not altogether selfish, in this motion of our will, which we call *Love*: We naturally *love* what we apprehend good, though we view it but at a distance from us. Many a man that hath no Learning, nor is ever like to have it, yet loves Learning, as it hath in it an innate Excellency, as it is an ornament to him that hath it, and makes him more useful to the world than his Neighbour. In Christ's excelling graces, which dwell in him eminently, and essentially,

essentially, there is such a lustre, and brightness, and glory, that to make the Soul take a complacency in him, there needeth no more than that it be enlightened to see, know, and understand Christ. Hence it is that many a Soul convinced of the filthiness of sin, and of the fulness of that Excellency which is in Christ, before ever it have received him, so as to apprehend its Interest in him, yet *loves*, admireth him, passionately desireth a part and portion in him, saith within it self, Oh that my Soul were brought unto Christ! Oh that this Christ were my Christ, my Jesus, *&c.*

2. But there is not only a transcendent goodness and excellency in Christ's Name, but also a *Relative Goodness*. Our reasonable Natures force us to love any thing which appeareth to us to be *Good* and *Excellent*; but we much more love it, when we discover in it a suitableness to our state and condition; and the more goodness and suitableness we discern in any Object in proportion to our state and wants, the more a great deal do our hearts cleave to it, and long after it. Now every Child of God is apprehensive enough of the proportion which the Name of Christ bears to the wants, the various wants that it hath. It wants a *Mediator*, a *Saviour*, an *Advocate*, an *Intercessor*, and this that Soul is sufficiently sensible of, and therefore its heart cleaveth unto Christ, and cryeth out, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? Or what have I upon the Earth to be compared with thee?* This Soul seeth, that there is nothing in Heaven or *Earth* that so suiteth the Soul of a Child of God as Christ doth. Hence his love to him is stronger *than the Grave*, and *his jealousie burns like fire.*

3. The Virgins must needs love Christ, upon the discoveries of himself to their Souls, *because these discoveries command, and teach the Soul to love him.* Our love to Christ proceeds, you see, upon rational grounds, but not wholly upon rational Principles; for we are taught of God (saith the Apostle) to *love one another*; and if without a *Divine Teaching* we cannot love our Brethren whom we have seen, we shall much less *love Christ*, whom we have not seen. Indeed this is the first cause of any love from our carnal hearts to Christ at all, it is true. No Sacrifice from our hearts flameth, or can ascend towards God, until fire hath first come down from Heaven and kindled it; when indeed love is thus kindled in the Soul, the fire increaseth in the Soul; as the apprehensions of Christ's Excellencies, and discoveries of himself, do increase in the Soul from the experiences we have of God, or the improvements of our Reason upon Revelation, to shew us more of the Excellency of Christ. I come now to the Application. In

In the first place, This may convince us, *That even amongst Professors there are many that glory in appearance, and not in reality.* They are *no Virgins*; *they have no love for the Lord Jesus Christ.* The world it is to be hoped is not so full of such as go for *Virgins* in a carnal sense, and are none, as it is of such as go for *Virgins*, in a spiritual sense, and are none. *Unmarried* they are, but you must understand it only with reference to Christ, who is the only proper adequate match for a reasonable Soul; they are without Christ indeed, but not without a Mate. Use 1.

First, Too many are *Whores* instead of Virgins. You shall in Scripture observe, that sin, especially Apostacy, is compared to *Whoredom*; and those that live in sin, to such as live in Adultery. God of old complained of his People, that he was broken with their whorish heart. Ah! how many Professors are there in the world, of whom we may say the same; God is *broken with their whorish heart.* How many spots are there in our Assemblies? How many of our Virgins that have at least such black spots upon their faces, as cannot be allowed to be *the spots of God's Children*? Some are gone a-*whoring after other Gods.* (*Reconciled* they call it to the *Church of Rome.*) Oh! tell it not in *Gath*, publish it *not in the Tents of Askelon*, that *Protestants* should ever again lick up that Vomit, and be so sottish, as to adore a *piece of bread* for God, or fall down before a Graven Image. Blessed be God there are not many whom God hath thus given over; I mean, not many *Professors*, though too many that have been baptized into the Name of Jesus Christ. But how many more have defiled themselves with damnable, or at least very dangerous Opinions? You read of the Daughter of *Jephtah*, that she went up to the Mountains *three months to bewail her Virginity.* The Mountains are places of solitude. How were it to be wished for many, that they would *go and sit alone*; that they would go up to the Mountains of Solitude, and bewail the loss of their Spiritual Virginity. They were sound Christians (in appearance) but they have lost their soundness. They were fond of *Ordinances* and Duties, but they have cast off Duties and Ordinances. They were of the number of Virgins, as we thought, and we were bound in charity so to think (we judged by the outward appearance) but they have defiled themselves.

Secondly, *Many are wedded*, and *no Virgins.* We do not call married Women Virgins. 'Tis true, they are not so in one sense, as the notion of a Virgin signifieth a solute or single person; but yet they may be so in another sense, as the notion of a Virgin signifieth

one

one that is *pure* and *chaſt*. But now, if you can imagine a Woman married to a Beaſt, or married inceſtuouſly, this marriage would ſpoil her *Virginity* in the faireſt notion of it. The Soul married to Chriſt, is yet a Virgin, for ſhe is married but to one Husband, and him the proper Husband for a poor Soul, ſo that that Soul is yet a *Virgin*. But now the *voluptuous* ſenſual Soul, that is united to a baſe and ſordid luſt; or the *covetous worldly Soul*, that is united to the gain and filthy lucre of the world, is no *Virgin*, no more than an *inceſtuous Wife* is in any notion a Virgin; and how many of theſe are to be found in the Tents of perſons *profeſſing to Religion*! How many *Demas's*, who have forſaken and forgotten their Religion, and have embraced the preſent World? *Judas's*, who have betrayed their Maſter and their Brethren for a few pieces of Silver? Surely the Soul, the high-born Soul of man, is of too noble an extract, too ſpiritual a ſubſtance to be united to the Earth. This is certainly a forbidden Relation. *Love not the world* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *nor the things of the world*; yet never were more to be found amongſt ſuch who are called Chriſtians.

Thirdly, Marriage doth not alwaies *ſpoil Virginity, as it ſignifies Chaſtity*: But an heart *equally cleaving and inclining to two men will*; eſpecially if byaſt to him who is not the *Woman's Husband*. She that hath one true and proper Husband, and yet loveth another equally with him, or more than he, hath loſt her *Virgin-heart*. Ah! how many of theſe are there amongſt *Profeſſors*? they are married to Chriſt in the face of the Church; they were baptized into his Name, and are under Vows to be the Lord's: But as God ſaid of old concerning *Ephraim*; *Their heart is divided, and therefore they muſt be found faulty*. Ah! How many are there that have divided hearts? that halt between two Opinions, and are not able to conclude with themſelves, *whether* Baal *be God, and they ſhould ſerve him*; *or God be God, and they ſhall ſerve him*? Nay, they halt between *two Converſations*; ſomething there is of Heaven in them, but alas! how much of the Earth? how much of *ſin*, *folly*, and *vanity*? how much of contradiction to their Profeſſion? *where's a Chriſtian* Caleb *to be found to walk with God fully*?

Fourthly, If we have ſome that are *Virgins*, yet how *few beautiful Virgins*? where's the beauty, the glory of Profeſſors? where's their former ſhining out before men? Ah! call your Children *Ichabods*; call them *Ichabods*. The Glory is departed in a great meaſure from *England*, from the Profeſſing Party of *England*. Where's the former

former sincerity, love to God, zeal for God, plainness of heart, sincerity of conversation, brotherly love, heavenly walking? the World, the vanities of the World, have spoiled Professors beauty. The Sun of a little outward prosperity hath shone upon them, how are they tanned?

But in the next place this discourse offers us *a fair opportunity to try our Relation to Christ*, whether we be the Lambs Wife, who shall hereafter follow him whithersoever he goes. Use 2.

1. *Are you Spiritual Virgins?* There are tokens of Spiritual as well as Natural Virginity. 1. *Purity, and Chastity*, in *heart*, as well as *outward appearance*; Blessed are they (saith our Saviour) *who are pure in heart, for they shall see God*; is not thy heart defiled, with sensual affections, impetuous passions, doth not thy Soul cleave to sin, and lust? 2. Dost thou *live like a Virgin*, an *hidden life*? doth not the world see all that thou hast of a Spiritual life, dost thou not like the Pharisees, love to pray standing in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the Streets, more than with thy doors shut about thee, in thy closet? liveſt thou any thing of that life which is hid with Christ in God? is it thy only and greatest care to please thy heavenly Father, and Christ thy great Lord and Master? 3. *Where's thy modesty*; the Virgin blusheth presently, when any thing is reflected upon her. Art thou ashamed when thou committest iniquity, and thy heart reflects it upon thee, or hast thou a Whores fore-head, that cannot blush? I might instance in many particulars more, but these are enough to try thy Spiritual Virginity.

2. A second note of the Spouse of Christ arising from this Text, is a *love to Christ*; *Love* is a natural plant, and groweth in every Soul, but *love to Christ* is a *plant from Heaven*, heavenly, a plant sprung up from the seed of God in the Soul. If Christ should from Heaven propound the same question to thee, which while he was on Earth he propounded to *Peter*, couldst thou answer with him, *Lord! Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.* This Grace of all others is most discernable, for love is of an active nature, and will hardly lie hid. The pantings of thy heart after him, the acquiescence, complacency, and delight of thy heart in him, will easily discover it to thee if thou lookest narrowly. The natural man cannot say, that his Soul cleaveth to Christ, or thirsteth after Christ, or taketh any complacency in the Lord Christ.

Thirdly. As God is the fountain of good, and blessing to his Crea-

Creatures, and as Christ hath a fair inheritance of a Crown, an Heaven, an incomprehensible glory which is annexed to the fruition and enjoyment of him, so the worst of men may have a kind of love for Christ, or rather, for what he bringeth along with himself unto the Soul.

Multi cupiunt con-regnare, non compati. Bernard in Cant. Ser. 21.

Lastly, Therefore, *Dost thou love Christ for the savour of his good Ointments*; because *his name is an Oil, or Ointment poured forth?* He that loveth Christ meerly for his Heaven, and Glory, is purely selfish in his love. I deny not but *Moses* had an Eye to the recompence of reward, and so hath every honest and gracious heart; without doubt Christs beneficence, and goodness unto us, and the benefit which our Souls have, and hope to have from Christ is, and ought to be a very great attractive, and to draw out our hearts more, and more in love to Christ; but herein is the purity of the Saints love; he discovereth such an excellency in the Lord Jesus Christ, that were he never to have an Heaven with him, yet his heart would cleave to him, & infinitely delight in him; if thou canst say, that thou thus lovest the Lord Jesus, it will indeed speak thee to be a *Spiritual Virgin*, a Spouse to the Lord Jesus.

Use 3. Exhort.

I shall conclude my discourse upon this verse with a threefold word of Exhortation.

1. In the first place methinks from this metaphorical expression of Saints under the notion of Virgins, I have here a fair opportunity to plead with *Virgins to be Saints*; Virgins (generally) have the object of their love to seek; Lo here a most deserving object for every young man, every young woman that heareth me. Methinks the holy Spirit points out this in the Metaphor *Therefore do the Virgins love thee*; Christ here expresseth himself under the notion of some beautiful young man, beautified, and adorned with all the advantages both of nature, and of art; So that the Virgins must love him. I noted to you before that some would have the term עלמות to be rather a term of age, then either signifying *Sex* or *State*: oh that I could this day prevail with you who are *young men* and *young women*, to love the Lord Jesus Christ. *Youth* is an age, a *time of love*, full of love, but it usually mispends its self upon vain, and worthless objects, the young man loves his lusts, and his pleasures, the young woman loveth dancings, and foolish sports, and vain company, and gay and costly attire, but how rare is it to find a young man or woman that sincerely loveth the Lord Jesus Christ? truly amongst young or old, there is hardly one of a thousand, but of those

those that are in the height and heat of their youth hardly one of ten thousand. It is too frequent for us, to give our marrow to the Devil, and then think to put off God with the bone. O desperate folly and presumption! offer this now to thy Prince, will he accept it? canst thou expect Sinner that Christ should freely love thee when thou art grown old, who refusedst him when thou wert young? canst thou reasonably think that God will be put off with the fag end of thy life, dost thou not know how hardly an old sinner is brought to repentance? sin is bred and fed in his bones, and it will not out, art thou aware how acceptable to God the sacrifice of thy youth is? under the old law no Sacrifice was admitted that was above *three years old.* Dost not thou remember how kindly God accepted his young. *Samuel, Abijam, Josiah, Timothy,* &c. who in their youth inclined their hearts unto him? doth the good nature and handsome features, and sweet perfumes of the young man please thee, and is there no excellency in the Graces of him who is *full of Grace and Truth?* is there no savour in Christs Ointments? no sweet Odour from his name poured forth! O come you that are Virgins, behold your Husband! an Husband, who if you be poor, is able to enrich you, if you be mean and base, *is* able to honour, and to ennoble you, who, (what ever you want) is able to supply you. O that upon the pouring forth of his name amongst you in this Sermon this day, some of your souls this day might be allured to love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, This notion obligeth all those that be Saints, or professe themselves such, to approve themselves to be Virgins, the *holy Spirit* hath so called them; certainly it should be their great care to answer their name. *To keep themselves, unspotted from the world, undefiled in the way;* free from the pollution of the world through lust. I have told you that there are many, who go for Virgins, but are not, they are wedded to some filthy lust or other, wedded to the world, defloured by entertainnig some corrupt & dangerous principles, or declining to a corrupt conversation; we live in a debauched, & a debauching age, you that stand, take heed lest you fall. Br. 2.

1. If you lose your *Virginity*, you lose your *honour.* The young Womans Virginity is her honour, *your freedom from idolatry and superstition*; your *soundness in the faith*, your purity, integrity, and holiness of life is your honour, *Hold fast that thou hast* (saith Christ to the Church of *Philadelphia*, Rev. 3. 11.) *that no man take thy Crown*; he who despoileth you of your puri-

ty of *Doctrine*, and *Worship*, or who seduceth you to any licentious practices, *takes away your Crown*, yea not only your Crown in respect of reputation, but your Crown of Glory also. *John*, Rev. 14. 1. *Saw a Lamb standing upon Mount* Sion, *and with him* 144000, *having his Fathers name written upon their foreheads*; and v. 2. *heard a voice from Heaven*, &c. and *they* (the 144000) sang as it were a new Song before *the Throne*, and the *four Beasts, and the Elders, and no man could learn that Song but the* 144000. *which were redeemed from the Earth.* v. 4. It followeth: *These are they which were not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins, these are they which follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, these were redeemed from amongst men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb, and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the Throne of God*; not defiled with Women. *Non polluti idololatriâ, quæ est scortatio spiritualis sed virgines fide & spiritu*, (saith *Pareus*) not defiled by idolatry, which is a spiritual Adultery, but Virgins in *Spirit* and *Faith*.

Secondly, Consider, if you lose your chastity. *It will be an hard matter to reconcile you to your first Husband.* If the Virgin be known to have lost her Virginity, it is no easy matter to procure her an Husband of any reputation; if the Wife hath lost her Virginity (that is her chastity) it is an hard matter to reconcile her to her Husband; *If a man put away his Wife, and she go from him, shall he return to her again?* Jer. 3. 1. It is true, the mercies of God are above the mercies of men, it follows there; *yet return unto me* (saith the Lord;) but it is no easy matter for a *lapsed Saint* to recover his peace; many a Bone must be first broken, and if such be saved, it must be *as through fire*. It is a dreadful Text which you have, *Heb.* 6. 5, 6. O keep your integrity, and behave your selves like Virgins, live an *hidden life* more and more to God, and Christ, more and more reserved from the world; learn what this meaneth, *Our life is hid with Christ in God.* Be like Virgins, *careful* in nothing, save only to please Christ, who is your spiritual Husband, let your behaviour speak your Virgin-modesty; and that you may keep your Virgin State, and behaviour. 1. *Take heed of Books, that will principle you to a Spiritual Fornication.* There are 2 sorts of Books in the world, which help much to debauch it. 1. *Amorous Books* full of *lascivious Songs*, and filthy stories. 2. *Heretical Books.* The first debauch People as to their bodies: the latter as to their faith and immortal Souls. 2. Take heed of *Whorish Company.* The Chast Virgin is often spoiled

ſpoiled by unchaſt Society. *Dinah* went abroad into wanton company, and was deflowred. If ſhe had kept her Fathers houſe, ſhe had probably kept her honour. How many Chriſtians are defiled both in Judgment and Practice, by keeping company with *Papiſts*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, &c.

Br. 3. Laſtly, *O love the Lord all his Saints for the ſavour of his Ointments*; for the ſweetneſs of his Name, which is as an Ointment poured forth. The beſt are prone to love Chriſt only for the Peace of Conſcience which they have, upon their *Juſtification by his blood*, and for the Heaven they ſhall have hereafter for his ſake. His Glory is exceeding ſweet. This Love is not to be faulted; but I would work my own heart, and have you ſtudy to work up your hearts to an higher pitch. Labour to be *like Angels*. The Angels were never Redeemed with the Blood of Chriſt, never knew what trouble of Conſcience meant: They have a natural right to Heaven, yet they love, admire, adore Chriſt; they are rational, though ſpiritual Subſiſtences. What maketh them to love Chriſt but the perfections and excellencies which they ſee in him. Let us ſtudy to be like Angels, to get up our hearts to ſuch a ſpiritual pitch as this; to love Chriſt for the excellency of his perſon for the ſavour of his good Ointments. I ſhall add no more to this Diſcourſe. I have now done with this third Verſe.

Sermon XVI.

Cant. 1. 4.

Draw me, we will run after thee. The King hath brought me into his Chambers; we will be glad and rejoyce in thee; we will remember thy Love more than Wine. The upright love thee.

I Have told you that the eight firſt Verſes of this Chapter contain *three Petitions*, which the Spouſe (by which we underſtand the Church, or the believing Soul) maketh to her Beloved, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The firſt I have done with, together with the Argu-

ments which she used to enforce it. I am now come to the second, comprehended in this Verse, with the Arguments by which she presseth it. Her first Petition was in those words; *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.* Here she saith, *Draw me.* Our English Annotations make the connexion thus; *Lord, do not only invite and call me, by the Preaching of thy Gospel (which are the kisses of thy mouth)* but command me by the *Power of thy Spirit.* Or thus; *Let me not only be passively happy in receiving tokens of love from thee, but make me active in maintaining communion with thee. Let me run after thee,* and to this purpose do thou *draw me.* Thus the coherence of her Petitions seemeth to lie. Some there are that do not make this a *new Petition*, but adjoyn the beginning of this Verse to the latter end of the former, and read it thus; *The Virgins love thee, and have drawn thee after them*; thus the Seventy read it ἑλκωσιν σε; and after them *Origen* and *Greg. Nyssen*, expounding it of the Faith of the Saints, by which they draw Christ after them according to his Promise; *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst amongst them.* But though there be something of truth in this, yet this Interpretation is, I think, justly slighted by *Lud. de Ponte*, and others even of the *Papists* (the greatest Admirers of the Fathers.) And although the Copies of the Seventy, which we have indeed thus read it, yet *Symmachus* and *Aquila*, the two other Antient Greek Translators, read it as we translate it: And I am sure that is the true Translation of the Hebrew, where the Verb is in the *Imperative Mood*, though there be a little change of the Vowels in regard of the Affix, according to the Rules of Grammarians: For משכני משך so I conclude, they are clearly a Petition, and thus the Vulg. Lat. reads them, with the *Tigurine Translators*, *Pagnine*, *Montanus*, *Piscator*, *Junius*, and indeed almost all others. Agreeing therefore in that, let me consider, 1. The parts of the Text: 2. Then open the terms: And thirdly and lastly, Raise and handle such Propositions as it will afford, and may be useful to us. You may in the Text please to consider,

Se. per fidem, quia Christus ubi vidit congregatos, &c.
Origen. ad loc.
V. Nyssen. ad loc.

1. *The Spouse's Petition. Draw me.*

2. *The Argument* by which she enforceth this Petition; *We will run after thee.* Where 'tis observable;

1. The parties promising; *We.*

2. The thing promised; *A running after Christ.*

3. *The Spouse's Acknowledgment of her Beloved's speedy Answer to her Prayers: The King hath brought me into his Chambers.*

4. And

4. And lastly, The Effects this Answer had upon her; they are three: 1. *We will rejoyce.* 2. *We will be glad in thee.* 3. *We will remember thy Loves more than Wine.* Then you have the Spouse's *Justification of her self* in this passion; *The upright love thee.* Let me now come to open the terms.

This word (for it is but one in the *Hebrew*) contains the Spouse's Petition. It is agreed by all, that it is the Spouse that speaks; by which the Jews, who understand nothing of the Gospel-Church in this Song, understand *Abraham*, and the Church of the Jews. *Aben-Ezra*, a Jewish Doctor, would have these the words of *Abraham* speaking to God to draw him out of his own Country into *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, according to that hard Precept to flesh and blood, *Gen.* 12. *Solomon Jarchi* (another of them) makes it the voice of the *Jewish Church* speaking to God to bring them back again to *Hierusalem*, out of Captivity. The old *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and *Lira* with him, make it the voice of the *Church of the Jews* coming out of *Egypt*, speaking unto God that he would go before them, as he did by the Cloud and the Pillar. *The Righteous of that Generation then said, Draw us after thee, O thou Lord of the whole world: We will follow thee in the way of thy goodness.* Mr. *Cotton* makes the Spouse to be either *Solomon* himself desiring to be drawn to Christ, or the Church of the Jews, desiring *Solomon* by *Laws* and *Edicts*, and *Proclamations*, to draw them to their duty. *Rupertus* his notion applying the words to *Elizabeth*, *John Baptist's Mother*; and of some Popish Writers making them the words of the blessed *Virgin* are hardly worth mentioning, any more than theirs, who would make them the words of the *Queen* of *Sheba* to *Solomon*. We have fixed the *Spouse* with the most and best Interpreters, to be the true Church of God, and every individual believing Soul; and then it is easie to know to whom the words are directed, *viz.* unto God; and whether we understand the first or second Person in the *Trinity*, is not at all material: For besides that they are both but one in their operations respecting the creature; Drawing is made in Scripture the act both of the *Father* and the *Son*. *No man* (saith Christ) *cometh unto me, unless the Father draweth him.* And again, *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me.* But drawing is *a term of motion*; there must be a term *to which*; Whither would the Spouse be drawn? This is not so plainly expresst in the *English* as in the *Hebrew*. I shall speak more to it by and by; but I shall first open the term *Draw*, and shew you what the Spouse desireth of her Beloved in this term.

משכני

Apud Genebrardum.

Ibid.

I find

I find the Verb משך in the Hebrew signifying four things.

Judg. 4.6. Exo. 12.21. Job 21.33. 1. It sometimes signifies *no more* than to go, to go on, and forward; so *Jud.* 4. 6. *Go and draw toward Mount* Tabor, *Exod.* 12. 21. *Draw out, and take you a Lamb*, that is, *go out*, Job 21.33. *Every man shall draw after him*, that is, *by little and little follow him to the Grave*. But it would spoil the sense to interpret it so in this place. The *Me* following makes this sense inconsistent.

Deut. 21.3. Job 24.22. 1 Kings 22. 34. Gen. 37 28. Jer 38 13. Psal. 28.3. 2. Sometimes it signifieth the *pulling of a thing or person to a place, by some violence or force*. Thus you read of *the Heifer that had not drawn in the yoke*, Deut. 21. 3. So it is said, *God draweth the mighty with his power*, Job 24. 22. And you read of the man that *drew a Bow* at adventure. That is an act of strength and power you know, 1 *King.* 22. 34. So they *drew* Joseph *out of the Pit*, and *Jeremy* out of the Dungeon, *Gen.* 37. 28. *Jer* 38. 13. And *David* prayeth *that he might not be drawn away with the wicked*, Psa 28.3. In all which places this word is used.

Psa. 109. 12. Jer 31.3. Hos. 11.4. Judg. 4 7. Eccles. 2. 3. 3. Because in love and *fair persuasion* there is a *kind of force*, compelling a reasonable and ingenuous person: *The word is sometimes used to express also such an action.* It is said of the wicked, *Psal.* 109. *v.* 12. *He draweth the poor into his Net, i. e.* he flattereth him, and under pretence of friendship enticeth them into ruine. God saith, He will *draw his people with the Cords of a man, with the Bands of Love*, *Hos.* 11.4. and that he *had drawn them with loving kindness*. Jer. 31.3. thus *Deborah promised to draw the Israelites to* Tabor, that is, to persuade, and to conduct them thither. *Judg.* 4. 7. *Solomon* saith, he sought to *draw his flesh with Wine* (so it is in the Hebrew, *Eccles.* 2. 3.) his meaning is, he would *entice* and *please his flesh*.

Exo. 19.13. Jos. 6. 5. Isa. 13 22. Prov. 13 12. Psa. 109.12. Psal. 36.10. 4. Sometimes in Scripture it signifieth, to *lengthen out*, and to *continue*. Thus it is used to signifie the sound of a Trumpet lengthened out. It is translated *prolonged*, *Isa.* 13. 22 *deferred*, *Prov.* 13. 12. *Hope deferred* (in the *Hebrew*, *drawn out*) *maketh the heart sick*, Psal. 109. 12. *Let none draw out mercy*: We translate it, *extend mercy unto him*. *None of my words shall be prolonged*: The same word is there again used; *O continue thy loving-kindness*, Psal. 36.10. This sense methinks seemeth not much forreign to this place, as the Petition refers not only to *first*, but *following grace*: We need the prolongings and continuances of Divine Influences to make us to run after Christ. The word, as the Learnedest *Lexicographers* in that Language tell us, signifies, *with a secret force to compel one whither we would have him*. It sometimes signifies, with *fair words*, *Reasons and persuasions to draw one to our side*. *Forster* tells us, that

V. Avenarium.

Christ

Christ without doubt had respect to this place, in those Gospel expressions. *No man cometh to the Son, but he whom the Father draweth.* And *when I shall be lifted up, I will draw all men after me.* And *Lud. de Ponte* expounds this Text by that in the Gospel, *Compel them to come in.* So then when the Spouse saith, *Draw me*; this is that she means: Lord! *Put forth thy secret Power, thy irresistible and effectual Grace; and compel me to come unto thee, and to run after thee; move me sweetly, but yet powerfully. Draw me by thy Word and Spirit, and by the sweetness of thy grace open my heart* (saith Mr *Ainsworth.*) I am weak, *Lord, add thy strength.* (so *Tremellius* glosseth.) Divine grace must prevent, and must follow, he that is not drawn, will be hindered by his own corruption. Lust draws every heart backward from Christ. The Soul must *by Grace* be drawn to him. *Bernard* understands it of an *act of power*, and thus glosseth. "*Lord it is better that* thou "should'st draw me by any force, than that thou shouldest spare "me, and leave me secure in my deadness.

Jo 6. 44. Jo. 12. 42. Mat. 22.

Satius est mihi ut me trahas scilicet ut vim quamcunque mihi infras quam parcens in meo me torpore securum derelinquas: Bernard. ad loc.

But let us weigh it yet a little further. It is the Spouse that here speaketh; The Church of God, the believing Soul; *hath the Spouse need to be drawn to Christ? Is she not already come to him, doth she not willingly follow after him,* how then doth she say *draw me? doth the Child of God follow him unwillingly?*

To this I answer. 1. *The Church doth not consist of all true believers,* there may be some in the bosom of that, that have but *a name to live,* and which had need be drawn unto Christ. For these the Church may be understood to pray; that there may not be any in it strangers unto Christ, but that as some are *drawn,* so all may be *drawn.*

2. But Secondly, *Bernard* (who starts this question) answereth it otherwise. *Non omnis qui trahitur invitus trahitur.* Every one who is drawn, is not *drawn unwillingly.* The Bear is drawn to the Stake unwillingly, so is the Malefactor to the place of Execution; but an hungry man may be drawn to his Meat, and the Cripple to the Bath, and both willingly; besides, if the Spouse were not willing, she would never make it her request to be drawn, nor yet, were she able of her self to go, would she ask to be drawn. Those who are weak, as well as those that are unwilling, had need to be drawn. How perfect soever the Soul be (saith *Bernard*) while it sigheth under *the body of death,* and is kept in the Prison of mortality, being full of wants, and full of sin,

Quanquam & quantacunque perfectionis, sit anima

ma quamdiu gemit sub corpore hujus mortis & seculi nequam retinetur carcere, &c. Bernard. ad loc.

sin, it goeth slowly and dully after Christ, and is not at liberty to follow him, but must be drawn to its Spiritual duty. I know (saith the Spouse) that I cannot come to thee in Heaven, but by going after thee, while I live here upon the Earth, and I know I cannot go after thee, unless thou draweſt, unless thou helpeſt me. She confesseth here, that she standeth in daily need of preventing Grace, of drawing, and quickning Grace, from God.

V. Lud. de Ponte ad loc.

'Tis true she prayeth, and so seemeth to prevent the Grace of God, but in that she prayeth, it is plain, that the Grace of God had prevented her; otherwise she would not have said, *Draw me.* She here desireth that Grace of God which might have a *divine, sweet, efficacious, power,* and force with it to constrain her Soul to run after Christ. The Kingdom of Heaven within the Child of God *suffereth violence,* and *force,* through the power of Lust and Corruption. She beggeth of God, to oppose the power of his Grace to the power of her Lusts, and *vile Affections.* She useth this word therefore to acknowledge her weakness, and to shew that without the help of grace, she could not run after Christ, according to that, *John* 15. 4. *Without me you can do nothing. Genebrard* saith that by this Phrase she teacheth us, that the beginning of our Justification is from God. *Bernard, Beza, Lud. de Ponte,* and others conclude, that she teacheth, that *further Grace is from God.* By the word *draw,* she begs, not only *first grace,* but the prolongings, and continuances of Divine Grace, according to that, *Psal.* 36. 10. *O continue thy loving kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness, to the upright in heart.* The Soul doth not only stand in need of, the sweet and powerful influences of Divine Grace to bring it to Christ, but to keep it, and to carry it on its state, and exercises of Grace. For whether *would the Spouse be drawn?* אחריך *after thee,* saith the Text.

V. Mercer. ad loc.

Our translation puts these words after the next Verb, *we will run* after thee; in the *Heb.* they follow *draw me,* and so may indifferently be read with either. The matter is not much, they must be understood here as well as there, the term of either motion was the same. Surely 'tis thither she would be drawn, whither she had a mind to run. The Spouse is drawn, and comes to Christ. *By faith* it runs, and follows after Christ *by holiness,* and is *drawn* so by a power inabling it to perfect holiness, it is *drawn to Christ* by *Death* (say some) so Paul *desireth to be dissolved, and to be with Christ,* 1 Phil. With reference to this *Bernard* puts this question,

queſtion, *An hoc dicit cupiens diſſolvi?* Doth (ſaith he) the Spouſe ſpeak this, deſiring to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt? He ſaith he ſhould be ſomething of that mind, but that the words are not *draw me to thee*, but *draw me after thee*. So that he thinks ſhe rather deſires the drawings of Grace, that ſhe might follow him in an holy converſation, walking as ſhe had him for an example. The ſum then of this petition, conſidered as the language of the Church (the collective Spouſe) is this.

Nunc vero quod dicit poſt te, magis illud poſtulare videtur, ut converſationis ejus valeat veſtigia ſequi. Bernard.

Lord! I have in my Boſom, many that are indeed drawn to thee in an outward profeſſion, in that ſenſe in which thou ſayeſt, When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me, they are *flocked like Doves to the Windows*: Oh *let them yet be drawn more effectually to an hearty embracing of thee, for none ſo comes to thee but he whom the Father draws, Lord draw that part of my Members by thy efficacious grace.* Conſidered as the voice of a believer, the ſenſe is this: *Lord thou haſt made me thine, thou haſt by thy mighty powerful work of thy Spirit drawn me to thee; but I am weak, and feeble, and not able to follow thee in a courſe of holineſs, nor to watch with thee*, thou who at firſt haſt *put forth thy powerful effectual Grace in changing my heart, in bringing me to thy ſelf, continue the ſame power of thy Grace, commanding me to keep my heart cloſe with thee, ſo as I may never depart from thee.* I proceed to the next words.

אחריך נרוצה

We will run after thee. The former word contained the Spouſes Petition: this, her promiſe: what wilt thou do O thou faireſt, if the Lord will beſtow upon thee the daily influences of his drawing Grace? ſhe here anſwereth, and preventeth that queſtion (ſaith ſhe) *we will run after thee.* Theſe words may alſo be conceived to have the force of an argument, enforcing her Petition, Lord! If thou wilt draw me, I will not hold back, no; *We will run after thee.*

Here is conſiderable, 1. The *Perſons promiſing, We*; where the change of the number is very conſiderable; ſhe had ſpoken before in the *ſingular Number, draw me*; here ſhe promiſeth in the plural, *We will run.* 2. The *promiſe itſelf*, or *thing promiſed*; *Will run.* The anſwering of two queſtions will open theſe words: 1. *What is meant by running.* 2. Why ſhe ſaith *we will run*, when before ſhe had only ſaid *draw me.*

Qu. 1. What is here meant by *Running*; what doth the Spouſe promiſe under this term of *running after Chriſt.*

רוץ 1. The word in the Hebrew, doth properly signify a *bodily motion*, and you easily understand what it is to *run*, it is more than to *go*, and *walk*. It is here by a metaphor applied to the Soul, or indeed to the whole man; for although some of the *Hebrew Doctors*, and some others (according to their different notion of the Spouse, which I before hinted) understand it of *Abrahams* bodily motion out of his Country, or the Israelites motions, out of *Ægypt*, and *Babylon*, or the Peoples *going to the Temple* in Solomons *time to worship God*, yet their notions are doubtless much too low, and not at all agreeing to that notion of the Spouse which we have fixed. I do therefore fully agree with the most, and the most eminent interpreters, who acknowledge here a *metaphor*, and that by *running* some motion of the mind is signified, analogous to the motion of the body, which we call *running*; now what that is, we must further enquire.

2. *Running* doth not only signify motion, but *some strength in the body so moving*. The sick, and feeble person can hardly stand, or go, much less run. The person running may want some degrees of strength, but he must *have legs*, and some strength in his legs, or he cannot run. The Soul that runneth after Christ must first be possessed of some *Spiritual strength*. The strength of the Soul is an effect of Christs drawing. *Behold* (saith the Prophet) *thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee.* First *God calls*, then *we run*; first he putteth strength into them, and then they use the strength, which he hath given them, *Isa.* 40. 31. *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength like the Eagle, they shall run, and not be weary*; first they shall *renew their strength, then they shall run.*

Is. 55. 2.

V. Ainsworth ad loc.

3. Thirdly, Running *importeth speed, and celerity in motion. Festinantem significat actionem* is *De Dieu* his note on the Text. *David* saith, *I will run the way of thy Commandments, Psal.* 119. 32. which he expoundeth, v. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy precepts. Buxtorf* in his *Hebrew Lexicon* noteth that the Greek word τρέχω which signifies to run hastily, comes from this *Hebrew word*, and others fancy that the latine word *Rota*, that signifies a *Wheel*, hath its Original from this word also; *Delrio* interpreteth it here by *festinabimus*, we will make haste, and indeed it is the obvious, and ordinary notion of the word; thus you know running is distinguished from those slower motions

De Dieu ad loc Psal. 119. 32. 60.

of

of creeping, going, walking, &c. Running argueth a quick and ſpeedy motion; the Soul having received from Chriſt the powerful influences of Divine Grace, ſtands not ſtill, creeps not, moveth not ſlowly, but makes haſt in the ways of God.

4. *Running argues a free and chearful motion.* The man that runs hath, as we ſay, good will in his way; it implies a *prompt inclination and readineſs of mind.* Thus *Forſter* (an *Hebrew* Lexicographer) notes a great cognation betwixt this word, and two other Hebrew words; the one of which ſignifieth, to *bring forth in plenty* and abundance; the other, *to be willing, or have a good will to a thing.* *Buxtorf* alſo obſerveth its affinity to the latter. *Avenarius* alſo obſerveth, that it ſignifieth to move readily, as the falſe Prophets ran, *Jer.* 12. 5. *Jer.* 23. 21. *I have not ſent theſe Prophets, and yet they ran*; as *Gehazi* ran for his *bribe*, 2 *King.* 5. 20. Thus the believing Soul that is once drawn by the Spirit of Grace, moves in the way of holineſs, not dragged on to duty by a *Foreign Principle*: It is its meat and drink to do the Will of God: It delighteth in the Law of God as to the inward man; it was before unwilling, but now it is made willing, as it is ſaid *My People ſhall be a willing people in the day of my power.* Grace giveth wheels to the Soul, and it oileth the wheels when given. *Buxtorf* noteth, that this word is uſed only to ſignifie the running of Men, not of Beaſts. Men move not like Beaſts raſhly and giddily, and meerly when they are whipped on, or out of wantonneſs, but men propoſe and know their end, and move toward it out of a Principle of Reaſon and Affection: The believing Soul knoweth its end, and moveth towards it from a conduct of reaſon; ſo it moveth ſpeedily and freely after Chriſt.

שרץ
רצה

Pſal. 110.

5. I find ſome *Interpreters* judging, that the *term* likewiſe implyeth a promiſe of *Perſeverance.* There is one Text of Scripture which ſeemeth to advantage this Notion, *Iſa.* 40. 31. *They ſhall run, and not be weary.* When men begin to be *weary*, they *leave running*, they go a foot-pace, & as it were draw their leggs after them. Now, ſaith the Spouſe, *Lord, draw me, and we will run; we will not be weary in our courſes of holineſs and duty, we will not faint and give over.* But running, in its abſtract, and ſingle notion, doth not conclude *Perſeverance*; running added, to *not being weary* doth. So here ſuppoſing firſt a drawing, then a running in obedience to that; while the Lord draweth, the Soul will run; but we ſhall no longer *dance* to him, than he *pipeth* to us. And this I think ſufficient to open the Spouſe's Promiſe: Only add further, that thoſe who run muſt have

V. Roboteham & Trap. ad loc.

a way, or path to run in. *What is the Spouse's way?* Beza saith, that Christ is both the *Principle* from which we run; *the way* in which we run; and the *End of the Race.* It is true, but in a diversified Notion. Christ is *our Principle* in the gracious Influences of his Spirit: *Without me* (saith he) *you can do nothing. Christ in his Word and Gospel is our way.* I will run *the way of thy Commandments* (saith *David*) *Psal.* 119. 132. This is the *Race set before us, Heb.* 12 1. The *following of Christ* commanded, *Luk.* 9. 23. Christ in his *Example*, in the *fulness of the measure of his stature*: Christ in his Glory is our End. That then which the Spouse here promiseth, amounts to this: Lord, "*I am weak and impotent, I cannot come unto thee, I cannot of my self move after thee; I am hindered by the prevalency of my lusts and corruptions; Who shall deliver me from my body of death? Who can but thou alone? Lord, draw me, make me willing, keep me willing, put forth thy mighty Power, and sweetly constrain my Soul by thy love, then I shall not stand still, but move in thy wayes. I shall not move weakly, but strongly, not slowly, but chearfully, freely, nimbly. I shall not be faint nor weary, but hold on in the way of thy Precepts, until I come to the fulness of the measure of the stature, which is in thee; yea until the day break, and the shadows fly away, and I come to thee in that glory which thou hadst prepared for them that love thee, and follow the Lamb in glory whithersoever he goeth.* But there is yet one thing further to be considered.

2. Qu. *What meaneth the change of the Number?* Her request was in the Singular Number, *Draw me*; her promise is the *Plural*; *We will*, or *we shall* run after thee. Who are these We?

V. Lud. de Ponte, & Genebrardum in loc.

1. *Thou and I together* (say some.) Indeed this must be. *I live*, saith the Apostle, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* We read in *Ezekiel's* Vision of the *Wheels*, of his Vision of a *Spirit within the Wheels*, without which the *Wheels moved not.* Suppose Wheels put upon the Soul, yet the Soul moveth not, without the Spirit moving the Wheels. *Ego cum gratia tua* (saith *Genebrard.*) But this seems to me too nice.

2. I rather therefore chuse to expound it with the most of Interpreters, and to say that by *We* is here meant, *The individual Believer*, and *all her companions. Ego & adolescentulæ mecum*, (saith *Bernard*) *Ego & Puellæ meæ* (saith *Tremellius*) I and my Maidens, *I and my Virgins, I and all mine.* So it imports thus much, that the Child of God once drawn to Christ, will make it her business to draw

draw others along with her. Yet a little further to enquire the reason why she changeth the Number. Doth she promise for more than she would pray for? Or doth she envy others that drawing grace which she prayed for for her self? Doubtless neither: what then?

1. Possibly *Bernard's notion* may be more acute than solid. *We are drawn* (saith he) *when we are tempted, when we are afflicted, and exercised with tryals, we run when we are refreshed and comforted.* She would have the *sowre for her self*, and the *sweet for others.* She did not know their strength; here was her charity. But I say, this seemeth too nice; for certain it is, that all who run after Christ must be first drawn one way, or other, and that by power. God's People are *made willing in the day of his power.*

2. *Beza* therefore speaks better, I think: When she saith, *Draw me*, she speaketh in the *person of the whole Church*, so had a liberty to speak either in the one, or the other Number: So that as *Ludov. de Ponte* hath well observ'd, by this change of the Number, she shews, that the Church, which consists of many, is yet but One; according to that of the Apostle, *Rom.* 12. 5. *We being many are one body.*

3. By this alteration of the Number, she sheweth, *That she believed it as easie with God to draw many, as one.*

4. Lastly, Though the Saints be many, yet the end of Christ's drawing them is, *That they might be one.* *John* tells us, *ch.* 11. 52. That the end of Christ's *dying* was, *That he might gather together in one the Children of God which were scattered abroad.* Thus I have opened the terms. But before I part with them, I must mind you who are capable of that Learning. That the Seventy add εἰς ὀσμὴν μύρων σου. according to which our English Translation should have been. We will run after thee, *in the savour of thy Ointments.* The *Vulgar* Latine follows them; so do *Origen*, *Ambrose*, *Theodoret*, *Vigilius*, *Hildebrand*, *Greg. Magnus*, *Nyssen*, *Bernard*, *Honorius*, &c. and generally the Popish Writers; but *Lyra*, who is one of them, differeth, and agreeth with the *Hebrew*, which hath not those words, and thinks, *they were put in by some Expositor in the way of an interlineary gloss*, and afterwards got into the Text through the unskilfulness of some Transcribers. How they came into the Text in Translations we cannot tell: Sure we are, they are not in the *Hebrew*, and therefore our *English Translators* had no reason to put them in, though they make no new Doctrine; for the believing Soul doth indeed follow Christ in the *savour of his Ointments.* We heard before, that *therefore do the Virgins*

gins love him, and it is their love to him which maketh them to run after him. But that is enough to have cautioned you of. I proceed to the following words of the Text, *The King hath brought me into his Chambers.*

This I called, *The Spouses acknowledgment or testification of her beloveds answer.* The word translated *King* is the ordinary word used by the *Hebrews* to express that relation by; she doubtless meaneth by המלך *the King*, the *King of Kings*, the mighty God; I shall not restrain it to *Christ considered as a Mediator*, upon which account he hath a peculiar Kingdom: The King, God my King.

Hath brought me.] The word is הביא which in *Hiphil* signifies he hath made me to come, or made me to go.

חדריו *Into his Chambers.*] The word is often used in Scripture, translated a *Chamber*, Gen. 43. 30. Jud. 15. 1. *A Bed-chamber*, 2 Kings 6. 12. *An inward Chamber*, Judg. 3. 24. A *Bridegrooms Chamber*, Joel 2. 16. A *Summer Chamber*, Judg. 3. 24. It is also used, *Prov.* 24. 4. *Prov.* 7. 27. *Job* 9. 9. and in many other Texts. It plainly signifieth, the more inner secret, retired part of the house, where Persons can be most private, and most secure; *The King hath brought me into his Chambers*, that is, into the places of most private secret communion with him, where I can be most private, free, and secure; but yet for the clearer explication of the words, we will more strictly enquire upon two things.

Qu. 1. *What is here meant by the Kings Chambers.*

Doubtless it is spoken in a figure. The House in the Heavens, not made with hands, is not (as our Earthly Houses) divided, into rooms, and stories, by partitions; let us therefore rightly comprehend the notion of a *Chamber*, and we shall without much difficulty understand the priviledge in which the Spouse doth glory. Three things will give us the notion of a Chamber.

* *In ipsum penetrale thesaurorum ineffabilium Delrio.*

1. *It is a lofty place*: elevated from the Earth, you know that you ordinarily call those rooms in your Houses *Chambers*, which are above the *lower floor.*

Loca quædam abdita, quietis & refectionis. Lud. de Ponte

2. It is a *place of privacy*,* any one is admitted into your *lower rooms*, but very familiar friends only into your Chambers, when those of the same family would be more retired and private, they chuse Chambers for that privacy; our more hidden private fellowship with our friends, or near relations is in our Chambers.

3. A Chamber is a *reſting place*, we eat, and drink, and have our ordinary converſe with our neighbours in other rooms we lie down, and reſt in our Chambers.

Theſe three things I ſhould think may make us to underſtand the Spouſes meaning in this metaphorical expreſſion, and what it is that ſhe glorieth in.

"*The Lord my King hath heard me, and taken me up into the* "*neareſt degrees of cloſe & private communion with him, where my Soul* "*enjoyeth him, in the moſt heavenly, free, and moſt familiar manner.*

Qu. 2. *But how cometh the Spouſe thus ſoon to glory, who but now was praying that the Lord would draw her*, and tacitly complained for the want of the manifeſtations of his Divine Grace? how ſoon is her tone altered? ſhe but now groaned, as one that could not get up the Stairs, now ſhe glories that ſhe was brought into the Kings Chambers. To which I anſwer two things.

1. Poſſibly ſhe ſpeaketh but *in the dialect of Faith*; you know the Apoſtle calleth *Faith the Evidence of things not ſeen.* It (like God) *calls the things that are not as if they were*, and often forgets the *future tenſe*, and ſpeaks in the Preſent or Præterperfect Tenſe. The believing Soul, while it is in the dungeon of a deſertion, being aſſured the Lord will do it, can ſay; *The Lord hath brought me into his Chambers.* And thus thoſe muſt neceſſarily underſtand it, who with *Piſcator*, by the *Chambers* underſtand Heaven, and Glory.

2. But I rather think the words are to be underſtood as they lie before us: *She is heard while ſhe is ſpeaking*; while ſhe prayeth, *Lord draw me*; ſhe is drawn, and is in Heaven e're ſhe is aware of it; thus the learned *Mercer* expounds it.

If you underſtand the words in the firſt ſenſe. They ſpeak the vertue and efficacy of faith, the believer by vertue of it, can look upon things as done, which yet are to be done, why? becauſe the Soul eyeth the promiſe, and knoweth, that he who hath promiſed is both able, and faithful. If a debt be owing to you, from an able, and an honeſt man; you ſay it is as good mony as any in your purſe, you count you have ſo much as that debt maketh, addition to your eſtate. Gods hand is an able hand, and he is faithful, the Soul may count upon it, that it hath ſo much either in Grace or glory, as the Lord hath promiſed it. If you take the words in the latter ſenſe (as I ſhall do) they inform you of the *efficacy of Prayer*, ſpiritual, fervent

fervent prayer, it availeth much; while the believer is speaking, God is answering. I proceed to the latter part of the Text.

We will be glad, and rejoice in thee, and remember thy loves more than Wine; we have heard the Spouses petition, *Draw me*, she prayed for Divine Grace, that might both sweetly, and powerfully *draw her Soul* after Christ. We have heard her promise, which I told you might be considered as an argument to enforce her Petition, an argument drawn from *the glory of God*, and the *concern of it, in the answer*; *we will run after thee*. A prayer for the best things, and to receive them for the *best end*, to make her more holy. We have heard, how well pleasing her petition was, she had no sooner prayed, but God answereth, and she recognizeth her answer; My Lord *the King* (saith she) *hath brought me into his Chambers*; now she cometh to shew the *effects* this *quick* and *gracious answer* had and would have upon her. She mentioneth three. The first (as some if not too critically distinguish) respecting her heart: *We will be glad*. 2. The second *respecting the action of the whole man: We will rejoice in thee*. 3. The third *respecting the record of it*: *We will remember thy loves more than Wine*. This now distinguished her spiritual affection, from a foolish transient passion.

נגילה We will exalt, or be glad.] the Radix גיל is very often used in Scripture, I will point you to 3 or 4 other Texts, from whence you may gather the sense of it, *Isa.* 65. 19. *And I will rejoice in Hierusalem, and joy in my People*, Pro. 23. 24. *The Father of the Righteous shall greatly rejoice*, Psal. 21. 5. *The King shall joy in thy strength*. So *Psal.* 2. 11. *Psal.* 13. 11. *My heart shall rejoice in thy Salvation*. Psal. 16. 9. Zech. 9. 9. *Forster* thinks it rather signifieth the expression of the Joy of the heart, by some outward gesture, than the meer internal affection. It doubtless signifies the highest affection of the heart upon its union with its desired object.

ונשמחה. *We will be glad.*] the Radical word is שמח which signifieth to *rejoice*, and to *be merry*, and is very often in the old Testament, used to express the *gladness of the heart*, *Exod.* 4. 14. The rejoicing of a Virgin in a dance, *Jer.* 31. 13. I shall not insist upon that *critical distinction* which some make betwixt these words, restraining the one to the *inward affection*, the other to the more outward expression; nor do I think it will hold but clearly both these are expressed by these two words, whither distinctly,

or

or jointly I shall not determine, and the sense is this. "*O Lord thou hast heard my prayer; thou hast granted the request of my lips, "thou hast brought me into thy Royal Chambers, admitted me to "Spiritual, secret, and most sweet communion with thee. Our hearts "shall be most highly affected with thee, and our outward man most "highly expressive of our inward affections.* It follows;

We will remember thy Loves more then Wine.

This is the third thing she promiseth. I shall be very short in the explication of this phrase, more fully opening the terms, when I come to handle the Proposition, I shall raise from them. Only this, the Heb. word is דוריך we met with it before, *v.* 2. the Septuagint translate it μασθῶν the difference is founded I conceive in the cognation of the two words, signifying *Loves*, and *Breasts*, they differ only in the points, but suppose it were *thy Breasts*, a figure must still be acknowledged, because the breasts are near the heart, and that is the seat of love, so that the sense still must be *thy loves*, thy *gracious influences*. *More then* Wine, that is more then those things which are most pleasant, and delightful to us; but I opened this, *v.* 2. It follows,

The upright love thee] in the Hebrew it is *Uprightnesses*, or *Upright things love thee*; so the *Hebrew* word properly signifieth. מישרים The same word is used, *Psal.* 17. 2. *Thy Eyes shall behold upright things.* The word is found in this form, *Psal.* 9. 9. *He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people in uprightnesses*, so *Prov.* 1. 3. *Is.* 33. 15. *Prov.* 2. 9. *Psal.* 58 2. *Psal.* 75. 3. If we expound it (as the letter of the Text is) in the abstract the question will be whether it should be read in the Nominative case, *uprightnesses love thee*, or in the Ablative, *in uprightnesses*, they, that is, the *Virgins love thee*. If in the first sense, the meaning is this:

Whatsoever is good, and right, is to be found in thee, all the graces love thee, that is, cleave and are united unto thee. The fulness of grace dwelled in him, and all vertues, and graces were made perfect in him. But although this be a truth, yet I do not take it to be the sense of the Text, and in my further discourses on this Song, I shall have occasion once and again to discourse that subject.

Secondly, It may be read in the *Ablative case*. In *uprightnesses they love thee*; that is (as *Buxtorf* expounds it) *Rectissimè, fortiter*. The Saints love thee most intirely, sincerely, strongly,

thus it will afford us this lesson; *That the Saints love to Christ is a most strong, sincere, and entire love.* The Virgins love Christ in *uprightnesses, not in word, and in tongue only*: but *in deed* and *in truth*, as St. *John* expoundeth it; they love him with a true, and perfect heart. But this will fall in the handling of the Doctrine, which will arise from the third sense, which is more generally accepted, and which I shall embrace.

Thirdly, Therefore I agree with those who think the *Abstract* is here put for the Concrete; *uprightnesses*, for the *most upright persons*. The *quality* for the *persons indued with that excellent quality*; a very ordinary way of speaking in the *Hebrew*, and indeed most languages. No wonder (my beloved!) *that I should love thee*, for there is not an *upright Soul in the world, but loves thee*; and the more there is of uprightness in any Soul, the more that Soul loves thee; *Uprightnesses love thee.* Thus now I have largely opened this excellent Text.

The *Propositions* I shall observe from it and handle them (if God please) in their order, are these that follow.

Prop. 1. *Souls must first be drawn by God before they will come to Christ, or run after him, and it is their duty to pray, that they may be so drawn.*

Prop. 2. *The Soul being drawn, shall and will run after Christ.*

Prop. 3. *That Gods drawing one Soul, will be a means to make many run after him.*

Prop. 4. *That God is often very quick in answering his Peoples Prayers.*

Prop. 5. *That Jesus Christ hath Chambers, into which he sometimes brings his Peoples Souls.*

Prop. 6. *That Jesus Christ is the singular object of the Saints joy, in the middest of its most excellent enjoyments.*

Prop. 7. *The Grace receiving Soul, will remember his loves more than Wine.*

Prop. 8. *The upright Soul will love the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the more upright a Soul *is, the more it will love him*

Sermon

Sermon XVII

Canticles 1. 4.

Draw me, and We will run after thee.

I Come to handle more largely those Propositions from this second Petition of the Spouse, which in my last discourse I had no more time, but to name, the first of which was this.

Prop. *Souls must first be drawn by God before they can come to, or run after the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I noted to you in my explication of this Petition, that there are two principal usages of this word *Draw*, in Holy Writ, it sometimes signifieth an *alluring by fair carriage and persuasions.* 2. Sometimes *a constraining by force and power*; both ways the Lord draweth those Souls that *come to Christ*, or that *run after him*, he draweth them *suaviter*, and *fortiter*, *sweetly*, and yet *powerfully*.

1. There is a drawing by *Afflictions*, and *Chastisements*. Afflictions are the Lords Cords. If (saith *Job*, ch. 36. 8, 9.) they *be bound in Fetters, and be holden in Cords of Affliction. Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions wherein they have exceeded, he openeth their Ear to discipline, and commandeth them that they return from iniquity.* Thus the Lord drew *Manasses*, he was *bound by Fetters, and carried into* Babylon, *and when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication,* ----- It is added *v.* 13. *Then Manasses knew that the Lord he was God.* I know that *Bernard* thus interpreteth this Text (tho he restrains it not to that sense) but I must crave leave to dissent from so great a Person, not only because I find scarce any Interpreters agreeing with him, but because then the thing here prayed for, must be *Afflictions*, which I do not know we are commanded to pray for, and I am sure nature restraineth us in such a Petition; neither 2 Ch 12.

ther are afflictions in their own tendency *drawing Cords*, they are rather called *Cords* and *Fetters* to signify their *pinching effects*, than that God ordinarily useth them to *draw* Souls by unto himself; we read of one *Thief* upon the Cross converted at his last hour, and of one *Manasses* converted by Fetters, but you have but a single instance of each in Holy Writ, and let me further add, *Manasses* his affliction was but *Fetters*, and *Imprisonment*, nothing that affected his *head*, and made him unfit to do any thing but to attend the distempers of his Body; nor indeed is there any drawing vertue in an *affliction*, it rather naturally alienateth the Soul from God: in my experience in the work of the Ministry, I have known many good Men and Women bettered by *Affliction*; but I never knew a *bad man or woman*, by affliction brought home to God; it is a fire that so softens the wax, and hardeneth the clay, and this agreeth with what we have in Scripture. *David* saith, *before he was afflicted he went astray, but his affliction had learned him to keep Gods Statutes*, *Psal.* 119. But it is said of *Ahaz*, 2 Chron. 28. 22. *In the time of his distress he trespassed more against the Lord*; *This is that King* Ahaz; and I am sure the same is said of the body of Israelites, *Amos* 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. God followed them with judgment after judgment, *yet they returned not unto him.* Afflictions are good remembrancers to them who have learned their duty before, but they must be some particular afflictions, that give leisure for *Instructions* to be then first given, or time for the *digestion* of them, if they can be given. I conclude in short, whatever use God may sometimes make of Afflictions, it is not the *drawing by them*, which the Spouse here prays for.

Secondly, *There is a drawing by liberal distributions of mercies of common Providence.* Thus God saith, *Hosea* 11. 4. *I drew them with the Cords of a man, with bands of love*, So Jer. 31. 3. *With loving kindness have I drawn thee*, Love is of a *drawing nature*, it is like the hook, in the intrails of a Creature, which draweth more forcibly, than Cords fastened to the flesh, and outward part; But experience teacheth us that this is not a sufficient Cord to draw Sinners Souls to God, God in his parable of the Vineyard, *Isaiah* 5. repeats what he had done for the Israelites, and concludes, v. 4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* Yet when he looked, it *should bring forth Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes*; *Oppression* instead of *Judgment*, and a *cry* instead of *righteousness*? How many thousands are there in the world, that are incompassed with Mercies of this nature, they have healthy bodies,

pleasing

pleasing relations, full barns, plentiful estates, they want nothing, yet are they Enemies to God, and to the Cross of Christ; nor do the People of God, ordinarily run most after, or walk most close with God, when they most abound with the good things of this life. Gods People, *Jer.* 2. that *followed him in a Wilderness, and in a land of droughts, forsook him when they came into a land that flowed with Milk and Hony*; whence *Agur* prayed as much against *Riches*, lest he should (being full) blaspheme God, as against *poverty*. And even the man according to Gods own heart, offended more, when he was come to sit upon his Throne in *Hierusalem*, than when he was hunted like a *Partridge* in the Wilderness, and knew not where to rest, and this is seen in our ordinary experience.

3. *God draweth us* (thirdly) *by the potent arguments of the Gospel*, as it *lieth before us to be read, or as it is opened, and applied to us by the Ministry of the Word.* Man hath a tunable ear, and is a reasonable Creature, so as arguments have a great force upon humane nature, and the more, as any of us are more knowing and rational, and able to raise *conclusions* from *Principles*. Into this sense Interpreters do interpret those words of our Saviour, *John* 12. 42. *When I shall be lifted up, I will draw all men after me*, after my death upon the Cross, I will send my Apostles up and down the world, to be witnesses of my death, resurrection and ascension, and to persuade men to receive me in my true notion, as the true *Messias* and Saviour of the world. Accordingly the Apostle tells the *Corinthians* that Christ had committed to them *the word of Reconciliation. Now then* (saith he, 2 Cor. 5. 20.) *We, as Embassadours for Christ, as tho God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead to be reconciled to God*; and this must be the meaning of that command to the Servants, *Luke* 14, 23. *Compel them to come in*, Christ is not there speaking to *Magistrates*, or of their duty, but of the duty of *Ministers*, who have no power from him to *compel* any, but by a lively and powerful *Preaching the Gospel*, the potent arguments of which set home upon reasonable and ingenuous Souls, by the gifts God hath given to his Ministers have a kind of compulsory force, and power in them, and the Apostle tells us, that *Faith comes by hearing*, *Rom.* 10. and as men are by it *drawn* to Christ; so they are also by it *drawn after him*, and therefore *Peter* exhorts Christians, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. *As new born babes to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby.* The believing Soul followeth Christ, in the *scent* or savour of his *precious Ointments*. It is the publishing of the Gospel that makes the name of Christ an Ointment poured out.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, God may be said to *draw men* by the common *motions of his Spirit*, impressing good thoughts upon us, either upon occasion of his *Providential dispensations*, or while we read or hear the word; some say that there is a common Ministration of the Spirit attending the preaching of the word, sufficient to assist every Soul that will, to repent, and believe, and to do what God requires of us in order to Salvation; that the holy Spirit doth ordinarily attend the preaching of the word, and suggest to and imprint upon the hearts of those that hear it, some good thoughts, is what will not be denied; I believe there are but few who have used to attend the preaching of the Gospel, where it hath been faithfully, and livelily preach'd, but must own, that he hath heard the Lord standing at his door, and knocking. But still the question is whether this be all the drawing which the Spouse here begs, No doubt but she begs such a cause, such operations of a cause as should be productive of the effect. The effects are *coming* unto Christ, *running after* Christ. *Coming* is not expressly mentioned in this Text, but it is *Joh.* 6. 44. *No man cometh unto me, except the Father who hath sent me, draw him*, and it is included in the term *running*. The *question* therefore must be whether such a *drawing* as is by *common mercies*, by the *preaching of the Gospel*, or by the *common work of the Holy Spirit*, all which reprobates may have, is sufficient to innable a Soul (yet a stranger to God) to come to Christ, or to innable any Soul already come to Christ, *to run after him*. I think not, and therefore I conclude in the last place;

5. *That both in the Souls first motions to Christ, and its further motions after him, the Lord putteth forth a powerful influence of his Spirit of grace, beyond the arguments of the word, the suasion of his Minister and the common work of the Spirit, attending all faithful preaching of the Gospel* This I take to be that drawing, the Spouse here prayeth for, and which our Saviour mentions, *John* 6. 44. (as some think with an allusion to the phrase of this Text) nay some bring that Text, *John* 6 44. to prove this Book quoted in the New Testament) This I firmly believe, because I am convinced, there is such a work of the Spirit necessary, and that both as to the Souls first coming to God, and further walking with God, tho as to the latter the Soul being renewed, and sanctified there be a far less influence necessary than as to the former, yet even after sanctification, the Apostle tells us *that we are kept by the power of God through Faith to Salvation*, and Christ tells his Disciples that *without him*, they *could do nothing*, Joh. 15. 3. And St. *Paul* saith, 2 Gal. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth*

veth in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God. But indeed the great question is upon the first. *Arminians* will grant *special grace* to *believers*, but no more than *common grace to all men in a state of unbelief*. Let us therefore first enquire,

1. *Whither there be not something of a divine power and influence necessary to cause any Soul to come to Christ, beyond the Preaching of the Word, and that common concurrence of the Spirit with the word Preached and all the suasions and arguments can be used by Ministers; and of what nature this power is.*

We affirm it, *Jesuites*, and *Arminians deny it*; let me shew you upon what arguments we assert it, I shall not instance in all or the 4th part of what hath been or might be said, only speak something to satisfy you, remembring that I am now preaching a Sermon, not writing a controversy.

1. *Those who assert that there needeth no such act of the divine power, must necessarily make man a God to himself; I mean the Author of the greatest Spiritual and Eternal good, both in respect of action and fruition*, whatsoever is moved, is moved from a *living principle within self*, or from another: Either man is moved to Christ as drawn by the Father, or from a *principle of life within himself*. I know they will say it is from his own *power of willing*; now besides the multitude of Scriptures, which this is opposed to, *Eph.* 2. 1. *You hath he quickned, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Psal. 110. 3. *The People shall be a willing People in the day of thy Power*, Phil. 2. 13. *For it is God which worketh in you to will, and to do of his own good pleasure*. I say besides these. This opinion makes man *the author of the greatest good to himself*. 1. In *point of action*, it makes him the author of th se gracious *acts* and *habits* by which a Soul is *made meet for the inheritance of the Saints of life, repentance, faith* and *new obedience*, expressly contrary to those Scriptures, which tell us that it is *given to us to believe*, Phil. 1. 29. That *Faith is not of our selves*, it is the *gift of God*, Eph. 2. *God gives repentance unto life*, and a multitude of other Scriptures. 2. And in point of *fruition* too, man by this Doctrine is his own Saviour; for *Eternal life* is every where promised to *repentance, faith*, and *new obedience*, which according to this principle are all works proceeding from our selves; so man is become a Saviour to himself by this new Divinity, and the author of the highest good to himself, and hath nothing to bless God for, but only making him a *Man, not a Beast*, for being indued with a reasonable Soul, and living under the Gospel, he hath a power of him-

himself to repent, to believe in Christ, to do whatsoever Eternal life is promised to in the Gospel, unless they will say he is beholden to God for the *Covenant of Grace*, annexing eternal life to these performances, and accepting sincerity instead of perfect obedience, which yet leaves the regenerate Soul no more to bless God for, than the vilest and most profane Sinner that liveth where the Gospel is preach'd, for he also hath a reasonable Soul, a will equal with others, there is a covenant of grace equally established for *Judas* as well as *Peter* (according to this Doctrine) One is under the means of Grace, and the common aids and assistances of the Spirit, as well as the other, for the good inclination of his will to accept the terms of the Gospel which the profane person hath not, the regenerate Soul hath no body to thank but himself, and to applaud himself for the principle of goodness, of which it seems he is an author to himself.

Secondly. *This Doctrine leaves the Soul something to glory in before God.* The Apostle treating of *Justification* by faith, in opposition to that of *works* argueth thus. *Rom.* 4. 2. *If* Abraham *were justified by works he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.* The Proposition of that Text which alone in this case, I will make use of is, That *God hath so ordered the causes in the Salvation of Man, that man hath no cause of glorying before God*; to that purpose he speaks, *Rom.* 3. 27. *Where is boasting then? it is excluded*; but admitting that there needed no power, to change the heart, but what is in mans will, *boasting* is not excluded, a man hath wherein to glory, and that before God; he shall say Lord! it is true, thou fixedst an eternal Covenant of Grace, thou madest me a man, thou gavest me the Gospel, and the preaching of it, but notwithstanding all that thou ever didst for me, I might have gone to Hell as well as a thousand more, for whom the same Covenant was made as well as me, to whom thou gavest a Soul of the same species with mine, the same Gospel, the same Preaching, the same common grace, if I had not had a principle of goodness in my own will, of which my self was the cause; I had been damn'd, notwithstanding all thou didst for me, as many others shall be for whom thou didst as much as for me. Is not here glorying before God? Is boasting excluded by this Divinity? The main parts here as to mans Salvation are given to a mans self! For I pray observe, a man cannot repent truly, and believe, and obey the Gospel, and perish for ever, now all these it seems a man may do from himself without any act of Divine power, inabling him more than a reprobate to do them, but he may have a common Covenant of

Grace

Grace eſtabliſh'd for him, as well as others, he may have a reaſonable Soul, he may have the Goſpel preach'd to him, and the common aids, and aſſiſtances of the Spirit, and yet periſh for ever. So as plainly all that neceſſarily brings Salvation, makes the Soul meet for it, and accompanieth it; all this is from man, nothing is from God, but that, notwithſtanding which, he might have periſhed for ever.

Thirdly, This Doctrine moſt abſurdly aſcribes *unequal vertues to Souls that are equal as to their ſpecies, faculties, and vertues.* All reaſonable Souls are equal, their faculties are the ſame, their vertues and powers the ſame, their Souls are under equal means, motives, aids, aſſiſtances, whence is it, that one mans will is enclined to believe, to receive Chriſt, to obey his laws; the others not? Are not here inequal vertues aſcribed to Souls in all points equal, they are both reaſonable, both have the ſame underſtandings, the ſame wills, the ſame means, the ſame common aids and aſſiſtances. I ask then whence, if not from a mighty powerful influence of God upon one mans Soul, one mans will, more than anothers, comes it to paſs that the Soul of one is ſoftned, changed, renewed, and not the Soul of another? If it be from a power in the Soul, here is a mighty inequal vertue, aſcribed to one Soul more than to another, of the ſame ſpecies, indued with the ſame powers and faculties, and under the ſame means, aids and aſſiſtances, which is a moſt inaccountable thing.

4. I ſhall add fourthly, If there be no ſuch *diſtinguiſhing powerful influence of God, making the difference*, the Apoſtle is contradicted, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive?* That their Souls are reaſonable Souls that differ one from another in Spiritual things is evident, not only in gifts and endowments, but in ſaving ſpiritual habits, now (ſaith the Apoſtle) *who maketh thee to differ?* Admit the Apoſtle there, not ſpeaking of ſpiritual ſaving habits, but of *common guifts*, or *extraordinary gifts*, certainly if it be God who in theſe maketh one Soul to differ from another, it is much more God, who makes a Soul to differ as to ſaving ſpiritual habits, ſuch as make the Soul fit for the Kingdom of God, and accompany ſalvation, but according to this Doctrine man maketh himſelf to differ. God doth no more for the believer than for the unbeliever, for the elect than for the reprobate Soul; ſo he hath not received, but may glory. God is beholden to man for inclining his will to him, he is not beholden to God for inclining his will more than another mans. From hence plainly appears that the *Drawing* here mentioned doth not ſignify the

meer change of a mans heart or life from a principle within himself, but a *change* from a *new principle* infused from another, from God; and therefore the Spouse here speaking to her beloved, saith, *Draw me.*

Thus far now I have evinced that the turning of the Soul from a state, and course of Sin, must be the *work of God*, and 2. That it must be a *special work*, special grace, but we have yet further to enquire into the *nature of this great work*, how God draweth the Soul that comes to him.

This I answer in two particulars, 1. It is *Fortiter*. 2. *Suaviter*.

1. *Powerfully. So as though the Soul may a long time oppose itself, yet it cannot finally resist it*, *Psal.* 110. 3. Thy People shall be willing, in the day כֹּחֶךָ of thy strength, so is the *Heb. Resistance* implyeth the opposition of the patient to the action of the agent; In all resistance there must be two parties, whose strength must be either *equal*, or *inequal*. If it be equal, there is no victory on either side. If the Patient be stronger than the agent, the agents intended effect is not wrought, but if the power of the *Agent* be greater than that of the Patient, then the Patient is subdued and conquered to the will of the Agent. Let us take an instance in Physick; we will suppose a *Stomach oppressed with wind*, or peccant humors; the Physician gives *Physick* to expel it, if the power of the wind, or noxious humors be above that of the Physick, the Physick is ineffectual, the wind yet rageth, the peccant humors prevail, or increase, but if the strength of the Physick be more, it expelleth the wind or the peccant humour, though they may first make the Person sick, and struggle a great while with the Physick, such a resistance as this, may be, and is ordinarily, if not alwaies made to the grace of God; especially to his *common grace*. God calls to the sinner for repentance, faith, new obedience, the Spirit of God concurring with the Preaching of the Gospel stands at the door, and knocks, *Rev.* 2. 20. The Soul saith, how shall I leave my sweet, and pleasant lusts, my sensual or carnal enjoyments. But there is a *resistance* when the strength of the *Patient* is above the *strength* which either the Agent putteth forth, or hath, so as all the action of the Agent is frustrated, and thus *Grace cannot be resisted*; that is, not *finally resisted*. It is the will of God to renew, and change the Sinners heart, and who hath resisted his will? The Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 2. heareth Christ knocking at the door of her heart, and saying; *Open my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled*; she maketh excuses, *she had put off her coat, and how should*

she

she put it on? she had washed her feet, and how should she defile them? Doth the Lord rest in that answer? no; see v. 3. *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.* It is much the same case with the Soul in its first conversion, God calls, invites, perswades, intreats the Soul to leave its sinful courses, and to turn unto God. Saith the poor Creature; I am young, and how shall I abandon the lusts of youth, I am ingulphed in a course of profitable sinning; how shall I leave my too greedy pursuit of the world, my pursuit of unjust gain, *&c.* Thus it resists a while. But God will not take these answers, he at length —— *puts in his hand by the hole of the door, and opens it. God cannot seriously act*, and be *finally opposed*, for it is certain his power must be above the power of the Creature. 2. That he must act *powerfully*, appears from hence, in that the *effect is upon the will*, otherwise inclined, both by *nature*, and by *custom*, which is a second nature; I say the effect is upon the will, a Castle too strong for all the power of Hell to subdue, the will can be over-ruled by none but him that made it; besides, this will is otherwise inclined. 1. By *nature*, hence we are said to be stubborn, stiff-necked, to have sinews of Brass; he knoweth nothing of the heart of man by nature, that knoweth not that it is averse to God. Add to this, that custom hath the force of a *second nature*; *how can you* (saith the Prophet) *that are accustomed to do evil, do well?* Nothing but a powerful operation can subdue, such a mighty *Prince* as the will of man is, nor such a mighty Tyrant as custom is. As to the point of resisting grace, we say;

1. There is a common, præcedent exciting grace, this may be *rejected*, as the *Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, for their own Salvation*; thus all reprobates living under the preaching of the Gospel, resist the grace of God; they have an enmity to the Spirit of God, *Rom.* 8. 6. and *cannot be subject to it*, hence it is, that God so often complains, *Jer.* 7. 14. *I speak to you rising up early, and lying down late, and you have not heard*, Psal. 81. 14. *I call'd you, and you have not answered*; Christ told the Inhabitants of *Hierusalem, that he would have gathered them, but they would not.* And hence appears that it is no wonder that *Arminians* who will allow none but common grace before conversion, should contend, that it may be *finally resisted*, for there is no doubt but all *common grace* may be finally resisted.

2. But secondly, We say there is a *working*, *drawing grace*, which may be for a while opposed, but cannot be *finally resisted.* By this the

Soul is *regenerate*, and *born again*, and that not after the *will of the flesh*, or the *will of Man*, *but the will of God*. This we say cannot be *finally resisted*; the reasons are:

1. *Because by this God gives a new heart, and a new spirit, and causeth the Soul to walk in his statutes*, as you will find, *Jer.* 31. 18. *ch.* 36. *v*, 26. Now grace cannot be resisted but from an old heart, and indeed it is a contradiction, to say God may be resisted by a new heart. 2. *Again if this grace might finally be resisted, the whole business of mans Salvation, must depend upon his own good nature, and the power of his own will*, and the proximate cause of a mans repentance, faith, holiness, must be in himself.

Thirdly, We say there is a *co-working Grace*, by which (as *Augustine* saith) being first drawn *we move*, being acted, we act; this is that grace, which God followeth converted Souls with, that Grace, which followeth the Child of God, all the days of his life, *without which he can do nothing*, *Joh.* 15. 3. through which strengthening and assisting him, he can do all things, through which he lives, and moves in his spiritual sphere, this is *resistible in part*, through that law in our members which rebelleth against the law of our mind, and brings us into captivity to the law of sin. Hence is the *spiritual combate*; the lustings of the flesh against the Spirit. Yet this is but a partial resistance, not from the whole of the regenerate Soul, but from the *flesh* in it, which lusteth against the Spirit, from that part which is yet unregenerate. Nor shall this resistance be victorious, but the same Soul that crieth out. *O wretched man, who shall deliver me from this body of Death*? shall in the next words say, *I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Thus I have shewed you how God in the drawing of a Soul to Christ worketh powerfully.

But 2dly, As he works powerfully, so he works *sweetly*, powerfully, so that he will be obeyed *sweetly*, so that he is *freely obeyed*, the conversion of a sinner is an act of *power*, but not of *violence*; the mystery of this lieth here: Because the *effect of grace* is upon the *will of man*. Violence is then offered to us, when we are compelled to actions contrary to our wills. The will is not indeed capable of violence; the will may be *changed, renewed, otherwise inclined*, but *not forced*, force can only be offered to the outward man, and why those who contend for a power in man, to renew, change, alter, otherwise incline his own will, should find a difficulty to allow God, as much power as they claim for man, who is but a creature, I cannot understand: Thus far I have shewed you that a Soul must be drawn before it

come

come to Christ. I have yet further to shew you that it must be *drawn*, or *it will not run after Christ.*

In this drawing indeed, there needeth not such a power as in the former, the reason is because now, *to will is present with the Soul* (as St. *Paul* saith) *it only wanteth strength to perform.* But *an influence*, a powerful influence there must be. *I believe* (said he in the Gospel) *Lord help my unbelief!* Lord *increase our faith*, said the Apostles! *without me you can do nothing*, *saith our Saviour*, Joh. 15. 3. and again saith he, *as the branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the Vine, so no more can you except you abide in me*, and 2 Cor. 3. 5. *Our sufficiency is of God, we are not able of our selves so much as to think any thing*, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me; we are kept by the power of God to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. The Apostle speaking of the weak Brother, saith, *God is able to make him to stand.* We stand *in grace*, Rom. 5. 3. Christ prayeth that *Peters faith might not fail while Satan winnowed him like wheat.* God giveth both to *will* and to *do*, both *of his own good pleasure*; but I shall not need heap up Scriptures in so plain a case. I shall have advantage enough to prove it from Reason, concluding from Scripture principles.

1. In the first place the Scripture speaketh of the *Children of God in this life as in a state of imperfection.* Not (saith the Apostle) *as though we were perfect, or had already attained*, Phil. 3. 12. To have no further need of Grace, speaketh a *self-sufficiency*, and a *state of perfection*, which is every where in holy writ denyed to man in this life, nothing needs be added to that man who stands in no need of the power and assistance of Divine Grace, but the holy Scripture every where speaketh of the state of man while on this side Heaven, as a state in which something is lacking to him, & of Heaven only, as that state, wherein *just Souls are made perfect*: wherein *that which is perfect shall be come, and that which is in part shall be done away.*

Secondly, *As the Child of God before he comes to Christ is in Scripture represented in a state of death*, Eph. 2. 1. You hath he quickned, *Eph.* 2. 1. *Who were dead in trespasses and sins; So when come to Christ, it represents him in a state of weakness*, Ro. 5. 6. *When we were yet without strength*, Christ *died* for us. Not only *life* but *strength*, was a piece of the purchase of Christ for us. Christ saith as to his Sheep, *John* 10. 10. *I am come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.* The Children of God are all as *Mephibosheth*, the Sons of *Jonathan*, and so beloved of *David*, united to Christ,

Christ, and so beloved of God, and must eat bread at his Table, but they are all of them (like him) *lame of their Feet*. Now those that are *without strength cannot run*; running doth not only require life as the principle of motion, but strength also to assist the motion; what the Apostle saith of their knowledge, and prophecying they *know in part*, and *propbecy in part*, is as true concerning all their other gracious habits and acts, they are all but in part, they are in this like *Nebuchadnezzars Image*, part of *Iron*, and part of *Clay*. *Adam* indeed had both his legs, a full strength, and could of himself (without any need of the assistance of a Mediator) have done all that God required of him in that state, as necessary to his Salvation, but he fell, and did not only for his posterity, as well as for himself, lose his innocency, and righteousness, but his spiritual strength, and ability also. His fall causing the need of a *Mediator*, and a coming unto him that we might have life, caused also the need of the influence of the Holy Spirit upon us, to quicken and innable us, to come unto him, and to walk with him, Hence there was a need of such a Covenant for God to make, as that mentioned, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall never depart from me.*

Thirdly, *That body of death which remains in the best of Gods People, evinceth a necessity of a continued powerful influence of grace to keep the Soul in any motion, especially in any quickness of motion after God.* That we have weights that press us down, a sin which easily besets us, a *body of death* as St. *Paul* calls it, proper lusts, lustings of the flesh against the Spirit, is evident in holy writ; we are indeed at last more than conquerours over this intestine adversary, but it is through our Lord Jesus Christ, *Rom.* 7. For lust is so connatural to us, the lustings of the flesh so strong in us, that our regenerate part could never else maintain the Spiritual fight. Besides (as I shall shew you) as we have an impotency, so as we cannot so much as will the thing which is good, so we have also a natural dulness and aversion to it, and this also remaineth in part in the regenerate Soul, nor to be conquered without the influence of the holy Spirit.

Lastly, *The many hinderances which the Soul hath from its Enemies without*, will also hinder it from running. *James* tells us, that *every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed.* This is a temptation from within, *a carne*, this would be too hard for a Soul in its own strength. But it hath also Enemies from without, both from

from its *grand adversary* the *Devil*, and also from the *world*. I must confess I have met with one, & never but one, that would pretend to maintain *a power in man to resist the strongest Temptations* without any extraordinary assistance of the Spirit of grace, this he would impose upon the world to believe, because that *Joseph* resisted the temptation from his Mistris. That *Joseph* did resist that temptation, is plain in Scripture; but that he did it, by no further assistance of Grace, than *Reuben* had, who defiled his Fathers Bed, or *Absolom* who went in to his Fathers Concubines, will want better proof than any I find in his discourse. I cannot but think that if man (without the assistance of special grace) *had a power* (as he boldly saith) to resist *the strongest temptations*; we should have none destroy themselves upon temptations to self-murder, *Atheistical thoughts*, and *Despair*. It is an inaccountable thing why any should destroy themselves if this Doctrine were true, especially if they be persons not before possest of atheistical principles, believing there is neither God, nor Devil, Heaven or Hell; who can give an account (suppose it in the power of the best of *men to resist the strongest temptations* without any *special grace*) how *David* (the man according to Gods own heart) came to fall into the sin, first of *Adultery*, then of *Murther*? *To will* was certainly present with him, (as well as with *Paul*) how came he to want a *strength to perform*, but from Gods withdrawing his special influence of grace from him, and leaving him to his own strength, which (though, the strength of a renewed man) yet is too little to grapple with a strong temptation. If even the best of men without the powerful influence of *special grace*, can resist strong temptations, how came *Peter* to fall by denying his Master by swearing and cursing that he did not know him? he manifested that *to will was present with him*, by his telling our Saviour that *although all men should forsake him, yet he would not*. God was pleased to with-hold his powerful influence, and to leave *Peter* to the ordinary strength even of a renewed man, he was not able to grapple with the temptation. It is so far from being true, that man *hath a power to resist the strongest temptations*, that without *Christs influence assisting*, he hath not a power to resist *any temptation*, whether from the *World*, the *Flesh*, or the *Devil*. It is *Musculus* his observation upon *John* 15. 3, Our Saviour doth not say without me you cannot do much, or all, but you can do nothing. Nor if it be a *strong temptation* (such as the *fear of life* &c.) can a Christian resist and overcome it without a more than ordinary assistance of *Divine Grace* proportioned to the degree of

tempta-

temptation. But vain *man would be wise, though he be but as an Asses Colt* he would be *strong*, though in very deed he is weaker than water, he would be all to himself, though he be nothing in himself.

5. But for a further proof of this *Proposition* concerning the necessity of *drawing, powerful influences of Divine Grace*, both with reference to the Souls first *motions* and *coming to Christ*, and *further motions*, in following Christ, and running after him, I shall but appeal to the experience of all *converted* Souls. If there be an heart before me which God hath truly changed, any one that is not only converted from one opinion to another, or one profession to another, from *Paganism* to *Christianity*: but indeed converted from the *love of sin*, and *lusts*, to the love of God, and the hatred of all sin, and an endeavour to walk close with God, from an opinion and confidence of, and in any righteousness in itself, wherein it can hope to stand before God to a *trusting* and relying on the Lord Jesus Christ and his Righteousness: I appeal to that Soul, what was it, thinkest thou, that inclined thy heart to accept of Jesus Christ for thy Saviour, to commit all the concerns of thy Soul unto him, and to alter thy course of life from a principle of love to God, and obedience to his will, more than anothers, who sate in the same Seat with thee, or lived in the same House, and sate under the same Ministry, heard the same Sermons? how camest thou to be taken, thy Neighbour left? how came thy will to *move regularly*, whiles thy Neighbour under the same circumstances still retained his stiff neck, and iron sinews, and hard heart, and continued in the same lewd and sinful courses? who made thee to differ? Didst thou make thy self to differ? How came it that he did not also make himself to differ? I know there is no Soul, whose heart is truly changed, but will say, if almighty power had not changed me, I had been as bad as any other. And so since thy Soul hath been changed, thou hast met with *Temptations* to sin, thou hast resisted them, overcome them, triumphed over them; others (possibly some very good men) have fallen by, and under them, who again hath here made thee to differ? No pious Soul that understands itself, but will here cry out *Grace, Grace*, powerful distinguishing Grace. So as this Doctrine is consonant to the experience, and judgment of the best of men, the other contrary to their experience and reason, and therefore not like to prevail much in the world with any who either understand what grace and holiness is, nor what the state of man is since the fall. I could only wish that those who so glory in a power they have to *come to Christ*, and to

walk

walk with him and run after him, and to incounter and overcome the greatest Lions in the way, would let us see it, by their strict and close walking with God, without putting such a sense upon the Commandments of God as the Pharisees did of old, whom Christ confutes, *Mat.* 5. according to which they may indeed be kept, by vertue of that common Grace of God, which he denieth to no man.

This is enough to have spoken Doctrinally upon this Subject.

The 18 Sermon XVIII.

Canticles 1. 4.

Draw me, and We will run after thee.

I Proceed to the Application of the Proposition, which I largely opened, and confirm'd in my last exercise, *viz. That no Soul cometh to, or runneth after Christ, till it be first drawn*; not only sweetly allured, but powerfully by God inclined; I come now to apply it.

This in the first place may inform you of the *Vanity* both of the *Arminian*, and *Popish Tenets* as to this great point. *Arminians* think it hard to be accounted Enemies to the Grace of God, yea they will profess themselves to own *special Grace*, but by the Grace of God, they understand no more than *exciting* Grace, the Grace of God in the Gospel, which hath appeared to all men, and by *special Grace* they only mean that *further Grace* which is given to them, who have first made a good use of the *power*, God hath created in their wills. They say that wherever the Gospel is preached, there goes along with it such a presence of the Spirit, that if men will, they may without any further influence of Divine Grace upon one more than another, repent and believe, &c. Use 1.

"That God when he calleth them by his Gospel, giveth to sin-
"ners, not only necessary, but sufficient Grace, for faith and obedi-
"ence, and seriously commandeth them to believe and obey, under

"the promise of eternal life if they do these things, and the "contrary threatning of eternal death if they do not. This "calling they say is in Scripture called an Election unto Grace "differing from that unto glory and Eternal Salvation. This "calling is effected, and perfected, by the Preaching of the Gos- "pel, and the vertue of the Spirit conjoined with it, and that "with a gracious, and serious intention (on Gods part) of "working faith in all those who are so called, whether they be- "lieve, and be saved in the issue, or pertinaciously refuse faith, "and eternal Salvation; for they tell us there is an effectual "calling so called, rather from the event, than from the intention "of God, properly so called, which calling obtaineth its saving "effect, not from any precise intention of God to save men, or "because it is so made by the secret and singular wisdom of "God, that it effectually agreeth with the will of him that is "called, or because in, and by it the will of him who is called, "is so determined to faith, by an irresistible, and an almighty "power (not less than that of Creation, or raising the dead) "that it cannot but believe, and obey, but because man doth "not put in a bar (which he might do) to the call of God, "nor resist Divine Grace. They tell us there is another sufficient "grace which is ineffectual, which through a failure on mans "part, hath not a saving effect, but is unfruitful, and obtain- "eth not its due, and desired effect, only through mans voluntary "and vincible fault; Hence they will tell you, that they attri- bute all to Grace, they make that the beginning, the reason of the progress, and perfection of all good, so that without preven- ting, exciting, following, and co-operating grace, the regenerate man himself, can neither will, nor do any good, nor resist any temptation.

Confess. Rem. cap. 17.

But they mean by Grace, nothing *but the means of grace, and such an assistance of the holy Spirit*, as alwaies attends it, and one as well as another hath, that sits under the Gospel; for that which we call *special grace* or *distinguishing grace* (the *drawing* of the text) by which God powerfully influenceth the Souls of some, not of others, and worketh faith and dispositions to new obedience in them, they deny any such thing, and so *attribute to the will of man*, all the change of the heart which we call con- version or regeneration; hence they will tell you, that God never so worketh in any Soul, but man may hinder, and finally resist his;

his operations. This is their opinion, which how contrary it is to truth, and how abſurd it is, I have ſhewed you in my former diſcourſe; what *Bradwardin* ſaith of the *Pelagians*, may be applied to theſe Teachers. "They make God *pauperculum Mercatorem*, like a poor Pedlar, that indeed carries about his Grace, "and perſuades men to receive it: But man is made the *buyer*. Thus (ſaith that grave Author) God ſhould rather, *gratiam ſuam commutare ac vendere, quam dare*; commute and ſell his grace rather than beſtow, and give it. Doubtleſs the will of God is the efficient cauſe of every good thing that is done, the firſt mover in every good motion, the begetter and preſerver of it. *Amantiſſima genitrix, & vivifica conſervatrix* (as *Bradwardin* expreſſeth it, *l.* 1. *cap.* 9. and maintaineth it from reaſon, and the conceſſions even of Philoſophers.) They will tell us they will grant this; That God is the firſt cauſe, and mover as to all good, and that all this is of his grace, but he moves us only, by external calling, and the common aſſiſtance of his Spirit. They much delight in thoſe terms, [*aids*, and *aſſiſtances* of his Spirit] by which they plainly grant the *will of man*, the firſt cauſe, and make the Spirit but an aiding aſſiſting cauſe. Again how is the converſion of a ſinner from the *Grace of God*, whoſe Grace it ſeems extends no further before converſion, to the perſon to be converted, than to the perſon that ſtill continues in its hardneſs, and inconverted ſtate, ſo as it is not the *Grace of God* that cauſeth the Soul to *differ*, for as to that, there is no difference, the ſame adminiſtration of grace, both to thoſe whoſe hearts are changed, and to thoſe whoſe hearts are not changed. They tell us grace, and in the ſame degree of adminiſtration, may be, yea is reſiſted, by many of thoſe to whom it is adminiſtred. This opinion muſt be faulty either,

Bradwardin de cauſa Dei l. 1. cap. 38.

1. By maintaining that God doth not *ſeriouſly*, and *efficaciouſly will the ſalvation of any Soul*, the contrary to which in words they affirm, and inſtead of it ſay he *ſeriouſly* willeth, the *ſalvation of all Souls*, to whom the Goſpel is Preached, which is very ſtrange; for which of us ſeriouſly willeth any effect, and want no power to effect it, and the thing is not effected? that an *Almighty God* ſhould ſeriouſly will, what he from all eternity knew ſhould never be effected, and will that which he hath a power to effect, yet never is, never ſhall be effected, is a ſtrange piece of Divinity, or ſenſe: Or elſe it is faulty,

2. By *maintaining a greater power in the will of man in its lapsed state, than in the will of God,* which is against all reason, and can be owned by none but such as deny God to be omnipotent; I have in opening and proving the Doctrine, said enough to shew you the vanity of this dream; I shall only add a word or two 1. *That this pretended willing of God,* which they affirm to be *real,* and *serious,* and yet *inefficacious,* not producing the effect, *is incompetent with that infinite wisdom and knowledge which must be in him, who is the fountain of all knowledge, and wisdom.* Indeed man who hath no knowledge of future contingencies; may *seriously* will, that such a person should be moved, exhorted, and call'd upon to do such or such a thing, upon the doing of which he should have an estate, and yet he may be left at perfect liberty, whether he will do it or no, and so the reward may not be certain, but contingent to him. But that God who from all Eternity, had a certain perfect knowledge who would, and who would not believe, and could not know it, but because he had willed it, (for the will of God only from Eternity could make that certain, which in itself was but contingent) I say that this God, should *seriously will* the salvation of all those to whom the Gospel should be Preached, and their faith, and holiness as a means in order unto it; when he from all eternity knew, that only some of those to whom the Gospel should be Preached, would believe and obey, and therefore knew it because he had eternally willed their faith, and holiness, and salvation. I say this is a strange mystery, which it will be hard for any thinking men of any degrees of sense or reason to understand.

2. Indeed if this Doctrine were true, no *Soul could be saved,* at least it were *possible that no Soul should be saved.* Our Lord tells us, *Joh 6. 44.* That *no man cometh unto him, but he whom the Father draweth,* and *every one as he is learned and taught of the Father, cometh unto him.* So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of the Lord who sheweth mercy, and man that is born again, is not *born again,* of the *will of the Flesh,* nor of the *will of Man, of God.* And it must be said of God, *He hath begotten us*; not only he hath treated, and intreated us, and proposed salvation to us, but *he hath begotten us,* influencing, renewing, changing the heart of the Creature by his power; not leaving us to the power of our wills, upon his word being preached unto us, and the arguments of the Gospel used

to us

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I appeal to any whose heart God hath changed, whether they think their hearts, had ever been turned to God if this had been all God had done for them, that is, given them his Gospel, and by that invited them to turn unto him, nor can it be supposed, that when an all-knowing, all wise God, from all Eternity, had a *certain infallible knowledge, who should be eternally saved*, and of the powers, and inclinations of all mens hearts, that he should leave the means in order to this salvation so imperfectly willed, that it was left possible, that by those means, none should ever be saved, and obtain what he certainly fore-knew, and therefore fore-know because he had willed it. But I have already abundantly shewed you the opposition of these notions to the plain revelations, and reason of Scripture; It is said that *God opened the heart of Lydia*, Acts 16. 14. And certainly if man had such a power, being unregenerate, to *repent* and *believe*, upon the proposal of the Gospel, and pressing the arguments of it, supposing the common work of the Spirit always attending the Gospel, he would much more have a power, being converted, to walk with God, to run after him, for the Soul not changed, is not only impotent, but *unwilling*, and *stubborn*, when converted it is willing, though weak, yet not so weak as before conversion; and according to all reason, the Soul, which is both stubborn, and wholly weak, hath more need of a power (foreign to its own power) which can be no other than the power of God, then that Soul which is now made willing, and only weak, and not so weak, as the inconverted Soul is, but this is enough to shew you the vanity of these principles, which yet obtain so much in the world.

2. The *Papists* say the same thing that the others speak, they will grant, *That man hath no power to spiritual things without the assistance of Divine Grace, he cannot believe* (say they) the mysteries of Divine Salvation, this *Bellarmine* proves from *Joh.* 6. 4. where he desires his Reader to observe, that it is not, *no man doth*, but *no man can come to the Son, except the Father draweth him.* Nay he tells us; that *without the special grace of God to help him*, man cannot *love God*, nor *prepare himself for Grace*; nor will any thing which tends to *Salvation*, or *Godliness*. But then they tell us; Bellarm. de gratia & lib. arbit. l. 6. cap. 2. Ibid c. 4. 5. 7.

1. *That this Grace of God*, is not the *sole agent*. That the Soul of man (as to the first grace) is not *merely passive*, but also *active*. Ibid c. 9.

active. God indeed *calleth*, and by *special grace* excites, and his grace *aideth the will of man in believing.* He falls heavily upon *Luther*, *Calvin*, and *Chemnitius*, for saying that the Soul in the reception of the first grace is *meerly passive. Pelagians*, and *Arminians*, ascribe to the *will* of *Man*, the whole power of closing with the promise by faith, being once offered in the preaching of the Gospel; *Papists* seem to divide Gods glory, betwixt *him*, and the *will of man.* God say they, must send his Grace, but his Grace is not that alone which produceth the effect for the *power of mans will* (though infeebled by the Fall) is yet alive, and God accommodating the Soul with the aid, and assistance of his Grace, the Soul joins with it, and this they assign for the reason, why one heart is changed, and not another (for God proposeth his special grace to all; where by the way you may take notice that they call *special Grace*, what we call *common*, because administred to all) because *free will works better in him that is converted, than in the other*; thus still *Arminians, and they are agreed*, that the fountain of all Spiritual and Eternal good is in mans self, that man makes himself to differ, and so hath wherein to glory, and that man is the first cause of any true Spiritual saving motion, and so inequal vertues, are, as I said before, ascribed to Souls of the *same kind*, under the same circumstances, and endowed with the same rational faculties.

Bellarm. ibid l. 6. c. 15. 3.

Secondly, They also agree, *That the operations of Divine Grace are no other, than what may by the power of mans will be not only opposed, but finally resisted, so as they shall produce no effect*, and that *drawing grace*, is no more then an *intreating*, and *moral suasion*, no such act of power as we would have it to be; man comes to Christ alone, he is not drawn. Therein they agree with the other.

3. Finally they say, *the converted Soul, can of itself, do acts of righteousness, obey the Commandments of God, and ordinarily needs, no quickning, only assisting Grace.* This is not to be allowed in the Latitude, though there be something of truth in it, there is certainly a greater power, and ability to spiritual good in the converted, then in the unregenerate, and unconverted Soul, we dare not say the Soul converted moves not, acts not, but as acted, and is also in that state meerly passive, God hath now infused a principle of life into it, his Spirit dwelleth in it. But we say that even the justified Soul still stands in need of a constant divine influx

flux, and that in a powerful degree; and *Bellarmine* himself grants that as the Soul hath at all times need of Gods assisting, exciting and protecting grace (for Christ saith, *without me you can do nothing*) so in some *hard cases*, and in the *performance of some hard & difficult duties*, he hath need of powerful influences of Grace. So as the *Jesuite* himself durst not ascribe so much to the *power of mans will*, though altered by grace, as those bold men amongst our selves, who will have man have a power not only in ordinary cases, but *to resist the strongest temptations*. It is a sign they neither ever knew what a strong temptation meant: Nor what it is to resist and overcome them. But this is enough to shew you the vanity of these Doctrines.

Secondly, My discourse on this proposition will let all of us see *the exceeding folly*, of *resisting* and *vexing*, or *grieving, or quenching the holy Spirit of God at any time in its operations or motions*. you meet in Scripture with all these terms expressing the opposition which vain man maketh to the holy *Spirit of God*, two of them, *resisting*, and *vexing* are applied to men wicked and unregenerate, *Acts* 7. 51. *You do always resist the Holy Ghost*, and thus you read of *vexing the Spirit*. The Apostle writes to the *Thessalonians*, not to *quench the Spirit*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 19. and to the *Ephesians*, *Eph.* 4. 30. not to *grieve it*. As the man that is *unregenerate* may *resist* and *vex*; so those that are renewed, may *quench*, and *grieve* the Holy Spirit. The Proposition which I have opened to you, shewing you the necessity, of our being *drawn* by this *Holy Spirit*, if we ever come to Christ, or being come, if we hold on in our way, and run after him, and walk with him, justifies those reproofs, and exhortations of the Apostles evincing it to be the greatest folly imaginable, voluntarily to do any such acts, by which this blessed Spirit should be resisted, *vexed*, quenched, or grieved. Use 2.

1. This may be done by *persons* whose *hearts are not yet changed*, they sit under the ministration of the Gospel (which is the ministration of the Spirit, and a glorious ministration) and besides the *suasion* of the potent arguments contained in it, set on by all the art of the Ministers of Christ, gifted by God for this end, and authorized by God to this work, there is hardly any of them but find some inward impressions of the Holy Sprit shewing them a necessity of *believing and obeying the Gospel* if they would ever obtain Eternal life, this they cannot deny, but cannot

not (through the prevalency of their passions above their reason) obtain of themselves, to hearken to these admonitions, and yield obedience to these impressions, but after the prickings of their lusts they must go, they cannot deny themselves in their pleasures, or profits, (be they never such forbidden fruit;) yet on the other side possibly their *consciences* bear so hard upon them, that they cannot quiet them, without promising, that they will amend their ways, they will turn to God, they only beg a little time, and cry out with the Sluggard, *yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber*, a little *folding of the hands to sleep*; like Trades-men, that know they must not spend all their time in their Beds, if they do, their Families must starve, yet their Eyes are heavy, and they cry to those that call them. It is not time to rise yet, an hour or two hence is time enough. So these men sitting under the sound of the Gospel, will grant you, that if they live, and die in such courses as at present they walk in, their Souls must perish to all Eternity. But this they intend not, only it is not time yet to *awake out of sleep*, a year or two hence is time enough, let them have some satisfaction in the pleasures of youth, they will *repent* and *believe* before they die, and upon this presumption, they at present resist the holy Spirit of God from time to time, and vex it, not only appearing in the Ministration of the Gospel, but in its more common motions and impressions.

This is what I would shortly shew you, the vanity of from the asserted truth of this proposition. Two things I would say to these Souls. That *whatsoever humane action is to be done, naturally requireth time and place*, and that the *Earth is the place, and this life is the time* for such actions, for (saith *Solomon, Eccl.* 9. 10. *There is no work, no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest*, upon which he exhorts us: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* It is only while we are upon the Earth, that *we are in the way* with God whom we have made our adversary, and whom we are concerned *quickly to agree with*, when we die we are *delivered to the Judge*, the *Spirit returneth to God that gave it*. When our *Dust* returns to its *Dust*, Our *compositum* is then dissolved, and no action can be the action of the whole man. When our bodies come to be covered with Earth, our bodies move, and act no more. In the Grave, none repents, believeth, prayeth, or praiseth, or any way remembreth God.

God. Thou ſayeſt, to morrow, or within a few years I will amend, I will repent; how knoweſt thou in what capacity thou ſhalt then be, what a day, or a month, or a year will as to thee bring forth? The preſent time alone is thine, and but a little of that neither, that which (as *Gerard* ſpeaks) *dicendo præterit, currendo præterlabitur*, is gone while thou ſpeakeſt of it, ſlipt away while thou thinkeſt of it. What talkeſt thou of to morrow, of the next week, month, year, who haſt not an inch of time at thy command, nor canſt command thy Sun to go back, or to ſtand ſtill for an hour? If *James* inſtruct us not to ſay, *To morrow we will go to ſuch a Fair or Market*, without adding, *If God will*; ſurely vain man ſhould not ſay at ſuch a time, I will repent, I will believe, I will turn to God, without ſaying, If God will let me live to ſuch a time; and poor creature, what if God will not! What if he will ſay unto thee, Thou dilatory fool! This night thy Soul ſhall be taken from thee, this year, this month thou ſhalt die. O the moſt unreaſonable vanity of men in venturing Eternity upon ſuch incertain contingencies! yet this is the uſual deluſion. *Auguſtine* confeſſeth, that his foot was once in this ſnare; he reſiſted motions for his turning to God, with *cras, cras*, to morrow, to morrow, I will do it, till at length through the power of grace he brake the ſnare, crying out, *Cras Domine! cur non hodie?* to morrow Lord, and why to morrow? why not to day? This is but the firſt thing I would ſay to theſe procraſtinating Souls, and not that which properly reſulteth from my former Diſcourſe.

2. But though there be an obvious contingency in that, yet we may admit that thou ſhalt live unto the time thou haſt prefixed to thy ſelf for thy coming, and returning unto God, *ſuppoſing yet that no man cometh to the Son, unleſs the Father draweth, how vain are the promiſes that thou makeſt to thy ſelf*? Admit thou doſt live to that time, and that before that time thy heart ſhall not be more inamoured upon thy luſts, and hardened in thy ſinful courſes, but that then thou ſhalt have as good and fair convictions as now thou haſt: Yet art thou ſure that God will then *draw thee*? Art thou ſure thou ſhalt then be drawn *by the Preaching of the Goſpel*? Admit that, Art thou ſure of the motions, impreſſions, and *breathings* of the holy Spirit of God? The Preaching of the Goſpel beareth the ſame proportion to the healing of the Soul, that the *Pool of Bethesda* bare to the *healing of bodily infirmities*. Men might lie there many *years*; the Goſpel tells you of one that lay 36 years, yet was not healed; the Angel indeed came often down and ſtirred the waters, but none

thrust him in. There is an healing virtue in the Gospel; it is the word of Reconciliation, the word of the Kingdom. The Spirit of the Lord attends the ministration of it, it stirreth the Pool; but admit this, if there be none to help the poor Soul that is impotent into it, it is not healed. What knowest thou whether the holy Spirit which breatheth where it listeth, will breathe upon thee at thy leisure? God said of the Old World, *My Spirit shall not alwaies strive with man.* If it be not perfectly in thy own power to turn to God when thou pleasest, it is the most unaccountable folly imaginable, for any to resist the holy Spirit, and to vex it; yet promising himself the operations and effects of it, when he will be pleased to call for, and to admit them.

But I hear some saying, *Do not you determine that the grace of God cannot be resisted, what need your exhortations then not to resist it?*

1. I have told you that the grace of God may be opposed and resisted, but that Grace by which the heart is changed, is powerful, and finally cannot be resisted; but certainly the common grace of God (which the Apostle saith hath appeared to all men) may be *opposed* and *resisted*, and finally rejected, and is so by the most of those that sit under it; and certain it is, that mens opposing and resisting of that common grace, may provoke him to deny *special grace* to the Soul that doth it, and will justifie God in the denial of it. For we have no reason to complain of God's not doing what was truly and purely his part, whiles we have not done what is our part, and in our power. Now, though the change of the heart be an act of Divine Power, yet acts of moral Discipline, and the avoiding gross and scandalous sins, and the performance of some religious Duties, which God hath prescribed as means (though not in themselves sufficient and effectual) are things within our power, with the assistance only of that common grace, which God denieth to none to whom he doth not deny the Gospel: And in these the holy Spirit may be opposed, and finally resisted, though he shall not be finally resisted by any Soul that is ordained to life and eternal Salvation; and it is certainly the duty, and wisdom of every Soul, to take heed of this *Resisting*, this *Vexing the holy Spirit*, because, as I said before, God shall for ever be justified in the with-holding his gracious acts of power, until man hath done what is in his power. To which I think I may add, that in the day of Judgment, there will be wanting a President so much as of one Soul, who hath followed the *drawings of his Gospel*, so far as he had power; to whom God hath denied the more *powerful drawings*

drawings of his Spirit, making a change in the Soul, and subduing it to the obedience of Faith; and also because God will not have his Spirit always strive with man, because he is but flesh.

2. But secondly, Even the People of God also fall under this reproof, though not for such vexings, and resistings of the Spirit, as natural, and unregenerate men are guilty of, yet for *Quenching the Spirit in its motions, and resistances* of it in his *operations*, whence the Apostle saw need of those Precepts, 1 *Thes.* 5. 19. & *Ephes.* 5. 30. We are prone, 1. *To Quench the Spirit* in its motions to duty, and to put them off. 2. *And to promise our selves, if we fall, we shall rise again.*

When we find some motions to duty, which we have reason to conclude to be from the holy Spirit dwelling in us, and sometimes from some more than ordinary suggestions to, and impressions made upon us, we are too ready to put them off to some other time, promising to our selves that we then will obey them, and hearken to them, not considering, that as our first coming to Christ dependeth upon the Father's drawing; so our running after him depends upon *Christ's*, and *his Spirit's drawing.* Now, though the Lord never forsaketh the Soul that is his, as to necessary grace; yet he often deserts it as to gradual manifestations, in strengthening, and quickening influences. See that famous instance, *Cant.* 2. The Lord called at the door of his Spouse, saying, *Open my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled.* The Spouse grieveth her Beloved's Spirit; she would open in the morning, when she should have had her full of sleep; when she should be up and dress, *she had put off her Coat, and how should she put it on? she had washed her feet, and how should she defile them?* At length *v.* 5. She rose *to open to her Beloved, but he had withdrawn himself, and was gone.—She sought him, but she could not find him; she called him, but he gave her no answer.* It is the case of many good and *pious* Soul. The holy Spirit moves it to some evident piece of spiritual duty; (for I am not speaking for extravagant impulses to things no where prescribed, or directed in the Word of God) the Soul is under some spiritual *Torpor*, and listlessness; it agrees the thing ought to be done, and disputes nothing but the necessity of doing it presently, it neglecteth it; it may be when it would open to its Beloved, it finds that he hath withdrawn himself, and is gone. It seeketh him, but it cannot find him.

2. Secondly, We are as prone also vainly to think within our selves, *If we sin, we will repent, if we fall, we will rise.* Or, *though*

we run into temptation, yet we will not fall by it. All this while forgetting, that although *we live*, yet *it is not we*, but *Chriſt lives in us*, and we ſhall ſtand in need of *drawing* grace to run after God. It is true, that if the Believer ſinneth, he hath *an Advocate with the Father, even Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* If *he falls, he ſhall riſe.* God will *ſuccour him when he is tempted*; but all this proceeds from an influence forreign to him. God is able to make him to ſtand, and *faithful*, ſo as he *ſhall ſtand.* But yet his own endeavours are neceſſary to his ſtanding, and Divine Grace is neceſſary (if he be lapſed) to his recovery; and though he may know, if he knows that he is Elected, and effectually called, and juſtified, that he ſhall not periſh for ever; yet this can by no means encourage his preſumptuous ſinning; for theſe two Reaſons: 1. *Becauſe while he lies under the guilt of ſin not repented of, he can have no knowledge of his Election, or Effectual Calling*, but hath reaſon to ſuſpect he hath all this while miſtaken the caſe and ſtate of his own Soul. 2. *Becauſe he may be ſaved as through fire, and go with an aking conſcience even to the gate of the City of God.* Now it is impoſſible, that in the Judgment of any Soul under the conduct and command of reaſon, the pleaſure of ſin ſhould appear compenſative of the rack of Conſcience, and the feeling the terrours of God upon the Soul but for a few days. If indeed man having fallen from his integrity, had a power to riſe again at pleaſure by the help alone of his own hands, he might have from hence a motive to indulge his corruptions; but if he hath no ſuch power, but what he derives from drawing grace, certainly it is the vaineſt thing imaginable for man to ſin upon a preſumption, of what is not in his power; and though he be certain of it in the iſſue, yet he may want it ſo long, as may leave him little pleaſure of his ſinning, little fruit of thoſe things for which he hath been ſo long aſhamed.

Uſe 3. Thirdly, From this repreſentation of the ſtate, the preſent ſtate of Man; *We may obſerve the difference betwixt our preſent ſtate, and the ſtate of our Pro-parent* Adam *in the ſtate of Innocency.* It is a point not half enough thought of, and the want of a due conſideration of it, cauſeth ſo many ſwellings againſt, and blaſphemings of the Truth of God in this point. They will not underſtand, that although *God made Man upright*, and in *Honour*, yet he *abode not in Honour*, but by ſeeking out inventions, became like unto the Beaſt that periſheth. The ſtate of Man at firſt was ſuch,

1. *That he needed not have come to Chriſt for life*; he had his life in his hands. There needed no Saviour before we were loſt, no

Mediator,

Mediator or Interceſſor, before man had offended, and conſequently, no applications of our *Souls* unto him for life and Salvation, and this by the way may ſhew you the weakneſs of their reply, who when they are told, that it is no more injuſtice with God to call to us for thoſe exerciſes of Grace in order to our ſalvation, which in our lapſed ſtate we have no power to perform, than it is in man to call to him, to whom he hath lent a great ſum, which he by his debauchery hath ſpent, to pay him what he oweth him, and to lay him in Priſon (though he hath nothing to pay) for God in creation gave unto man a power to do whatſoever in that ſtate was neceſſary to his Salvation. I ſay when they are told this, they uſually tell us, That *Adam* never had a *power to repent and believe in Chriſt*; Nor was *repentance or faith in Chriſt* neceſſary in that ſtate wherein *Adam* was created, nor would it ever have been neceſſary either to him, or us, had he ſtood in that eſtate, God gave unto *Adam* and to us in him, whatſoever was neceſſary in that ſtate, and if our Fore-fafather, and we (who dyed in him, and fell with him) have made a *Mediator* neceſſary, and repentance, and *faith* in the Mediator neceſſary, and we have no power to theſe acts, nor ever had, no not in *Adam*, how yet is God unrighteous in requiring thoſe acts of us, though we have no power to perform them?

Secondly, As in that ſtate, there was no need of a Chriſt, of a Saviour, a Redeemer, nor conſequently of a being drawn, or a coming to him: *So neither was there need of any ſuch potent drawing in order to our running after him.* *Adam* had a perfect power connatural to him, to walk with God in the obedience of his will. It was the fall that lamed us in our feet, and introduced this neceſſity of Chriſts drawings in order to our running. Let us in a word or two take a view of man now in this, that he ſtands in need of theſe divine drawings.

1. He now ſtands in need of a *Mediator*, and there is no name given under Heaven by which any Soul can be ſaved, but *only the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, no Salvation by any other.*

2. He ſtands in need of *drawing to this Mediator*, not only of a Child to be born a Son again, a Saviour prepared, but of the work of the Father, and the holy Spirit to draw us to, and after this Mediator.

1. *Drawing* (as I have ſhewed you) imports a fair treating, & intreating, & alluring Souls to what is their great and only happineſs,

ness, this speaks man, 1. *In a state of aversion from God* and his only felicity. Mans supreme happiness lies in his union, and communion with God, as the supreme and greatest good; yet he must be *drawn* to it, drawn with the cords of a man, allured by mans Rhetorick, perswaded to it by mans *Logick*, and ratiocination; we as the Embassadours of Christ, must beseech and intreat men to be happy in being reconciled to God, and thus much is granted to us by those who make themeanest, and most jejune interpretation of this drawing.

2. Drawing (secondly) signifieth *an act of power*. This speaketh us not only *averse*, but *impotent and weak without strength*. We are like *Lot* in *Sodom*; though we daily hear that *the wicked shall be turned into Hell, with all those that forget God*, though the Lord useth all intreaties with his poor Creatures, and the *love of God* be displayed before us in the fullest measure, yet till the Lord doth by us (as the Angel did by *Lot*) lay hold upon us, and pull us out of our sinful state, we move not a jot. Yea verily man in his best estate, man regenerate, and brought home to God, must also be drawn, or he will not *run*, he must be *kept by the power of God* through faith to Salvation, or he will never come into Heaven; when to will is present with us, we have no strength to perform. *The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. O miserable men that we are, who shall deliver us from our bodies of death.* I need say no more, it being what is justified by the experience of the best of men, and their prayers directed to God accordingly.

Sermon XIX.

Cant. 1. 4.

Draw me, and we will run after thee.

I Have formerly discoursed from this Text this *Proposition*, *That the Soul till drawn, doth not run after Christ*. I am in the application of that discourse, and that by way of *Instruction*.

This

This may inform us in the true nature of *ſpecial ſaving Grace.* It is a *drawing* to, and *after Chriſt. Grace* in its general notion ſignifieth nothing but *free love and favour.* Let me find *grace,* or I have found *grace,* ſignifies no more in Scripture, than though I have *no worth, no merit,* yet ſhew me love and favour; when applied to God, it ſignifieth no more in the *general notion,* whether this love be ſhewed in the collation of the good things which concern this life, or thoſe which concern that life which is to come, they are all *grace* in a large ſenſe, becauſe *emanations* of divine *love,* not merited by Creatures. But words taking their *ſignificancy* more from uſe than *etymology, Grace* in a more ſtrict and uſual notion hath been taken to *ſignify.* The *emanations of Divine love concerning the Souls, and Eternal Salvation of the Children of men,* which is called the *Grace of God* which *bringeth Salvation.* Now theſe divine *emanations* having different effects, this *Grace* of God is alſo diſtinguiſhed into *Common* and ſpecial, *ineffectual,* and *effectual*; under the notion of *common grace,* we comprehend all thoſe effluxes of divine goodneſs, by which God ſheweth his kindneſs to the Souls of men in order to their Salvation, whether they prove effective of their Salvation, yea or no; under this head, ſome will bring both *Election* and *Redemption,* owning no other *Election,* than the eternal counſel of God to ſave ſuch as ſhould believe, ſo denying all eternal *Election of perſons,* and making *Chriſts intention in dying* to extend to all, either equally, or at leaſt ſo far as to put all in a poſſibility of Salvation, if their own perverſe wills do not hinder. The *Publication,* and *propoſal* of the Goſpel, with the common influences of the Spirit attending the preaching of it, certainly come under this notion, for though all hear not that joyful ſound, yet it is granted on all hands, that of thoſe that do hear it, to ſome it is the ſavour of life unto life, to others the ſavour of death unto death. And this is all the *grace* which ſome will *acknowledge,* antecedent to the *pardon of ſins,* and *regeneration.* But we affirm a further *ſpecial grace* than this is, which we call *ſpecial,* becauſe it is not equally adminiſtred to all, no not to all that *hear the Goſpel, ſaving,* becauſe it brings *ſalvation,* not only in a general *tender,* and offer unto all, but to that *particular Soul,* upon whom it ſhineth, and ſo is *effectual,* becauſe *effective* of the bleſſed end to which it is levelled, and aimed, and doth not *evaporate* in a meer *tender,* and *propoſal* of the *will of God.* This is that which

Uſe 4.

we

we conceive expressed here, and in *John* 6. 44. under the notion of *drawing*. Which term is fully expressive of the Nature of it, as it signifieth both, 1. *An act of power.* 2. *An act of sweetness and love.*

1. *An act of power.* The converted Soul is made willing in the day of the *Lords power*, *Psal.* 110. 3, 4. The holy Scripture describes us in our natural state, as dead in *trespasses* and *sins*, Eph. 2. 1. *Enemies to God*, Col. 1. 21. and *alienated from the life of God.* Having *hearts*, harder then *rocks*, then *nether milstones*, *iron sinews*, *stiff necks.* Let those that think, a meer *intreaty* of a Soul to come to Christ, that it might have life, a meer *moral suasion*, or persuading a Soul to Spiritual duty, will change it, and renew it, and beget in it spiritual habits, try what their Rhetorick will do, to melt a rock, or to raise a dead body. If the disadvantage of an ill education, and a customary course of debauchery, added to our vitiated nature, hath such a power to beget in us a *moral impotency*, that the *drunkard*, and the *unclean* person cannot obtain of himself, notwithstanding the advantage of his own ratiocination, and the potent arguments drawn from the health of his body, the upholding his reputation amongst men, the preservation of his estate, the pleasing of his sober friends, to turn from an Alehouse, and Tavern, and from the house of the strange Woman, no not tho his own experience, and the daily experience of others, verifieth these arguments; and the acts are but such, as by the force of reason (supposing the common grace of God denied to none) may be declined. How shall we ever think, that a man hath a natural power to the most *sublime* and *spiritual acts*, and that the *power of God* must not be put forth upon a Soul, causing it to *love God*, and to *hate sin*, and to *believe in the Lord JesusChrist*. Two things evince *this grace* to be an act of divine power.

1. *The invisibility of Christ and his excellencies.* 2. *The natural alienation of our Souls from him.* If indeed our need of Christ, or the suitableness which is in him to the lapsed state of Souls, were either evident to sense, or demonstrable to reason, or the excellencies of Christ were demonstrable to either; something might be said for the sufficiency of rational arguments to persuade the Soul to Christ, yet not enough in that case, for the sensibility of the goodness of *temperance*, and *sobriety* and *chastity*, their suitableness to the frail state of our bodies, ready to be

destroy-

destroyed by debaucheries opposite to these vertuous habits, we see by experience, are not enough to keep Souls within the circle and bounds of morality. But the other things being neither subject to the demonstration of sense or reason, it is most irrational to plead for a power in the will of man to chuse them. The sweetness of what the lapsed Soul in its state of alienation from God tasteth in sensible satisfactions, is a thing evident to sense, and it is most absurd to imagine, that a Soul should ever call these things bitter, till it be convinced of a more excellent good, and the incompetency of its fruition both of the one and of the other. Could it be any thing less than a powerful act of Divine Grace, that could make *Moses* willing, to refuse the *pleasures* of *Pharaohs Court, and the honour of being called his Son, and to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, counting the reproach of Christ, greater riches then the Treasures of Ægypt?* O study, and adore the power of *saving* and *effectual Divine Grace.* Do but consider your own weakness, and the mighty power of Satan in tempting, and you will be convinced, that there had need be a divine power exerted, in the collation of saving Grace.

2. But yet as it is *mighty* and *powerful*, so it is also sweet; we are *drawn to Christ*, but it is with the cords of a man, the *divine power* put forth, hath the *will for the object*, which is not *forced*, but melted, *renewed*, changed by the influence of the mighty God upon it. Indeed the *will* is not capable of *violence*, but yet it is capable of a *divine influence* sweetly *renewing*, and changing it, the Soul is made willing, and then it *wills*, and chuseth, desires, delights in the things which are good, and acceptable in the sight of God. *Grace* doth not meerly exhibit, and propose *Christ* as a lovely, and beautiful object, *altogether desires*, it doth not only furnish the Gospel, and fill the mouths of Ministers with suasive arguments, but it fills the Soul, the inward man with a powerful divine influence, which quite reneweth and changeth it, and altereth the byas and inclination of it. This is the nature of saving grace, effectual grace, thus it differs from that Grace of God which may shine upon reprobates, which they may finally resist, and abide still in darkness.

This notion in the next place wonderfully commendeth the love of God, to those Souls that are made partakers of this Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, that maketh *a Soul meet* Use 5.

for the inheritance of the Saints in light. The great boast which those who maintain the contrary systeme of Doctrine to what I have maintained, make, is, that their Doctrine doth *vastly more commend the love of God to mankind.* Let us try that a little; According to their Notion of the *Grace of God*, it is no more, than might have been consistent with the *Eternal perdition of all mankind*; for they say God hath determined no particular person unto eternal life, Christ hath laid down a price no more for the Soul that is saved, than for those that perish. In the Acts of his Providence he doth no more for one than another. Both have the Gospel, both have the common assistances of the Spirit, and one hath no more than another, both have Souls of the same *species*, indued with the same faculties, both might have resisted the Grace of God, and that finally. Now do not these mightily magnify Grace, who will allow no more of it then what is consistent with the eternal destruction of all men? yet neither are they consistent to themselves in their doctrine of *Grace*, so far as they will allow any thing to it, they pretend the advancement of the love of God, by their *conditional Election, incertain Covenant, universal Redemption, common Grace*, yet they cannot deny, but that the far greater part of the world hath not so much as the means of grace, the sound of the Gospel is not in their Ears; and how little of it is there in Popish Countries, where the People have not the Bible in their own language, and hear stories, and tales out of the *Legends* instead of the Gospel? nay, in Protestant Countries how many places are there, where People have Stones instead of Bread, Scorpions instead of Fishes, where they from the Pulpit hear little of Christ, or the great motives of the Gospel to faith and holiness? so as to make out their notion of their Doctrines, commending the love of God; they must find out a way to Christ and Salvation, for more than three parts of the world, without Christ, and that an ordinary way too, (or but few of them will be saved) yet in this extraordinary, that their Salvation must be without the Gospel, and the potent motives and arguments of it, the Preaching of it, and the ordinary concurrence of the Holy Spirit with it. The opinion of Divines on the other side is this, That God out of the Mass of Mankind (whether considered as created, or to be created, they are not so universally agreed) did chuse a certain number of Persons great in itself, but small in comparison of the whole

whole number of mankind, as to whom he willed a Kingdom of life and glory: and also chose them and ordained them to obtain this life, by having Redemption through the Blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and by being holy and unblameable before him, and to this end sent his Son to die for them, and gives to the most of them, whom he thus ordained to life, and to faith, and holiness, as the means of it, his Gospel, and the Ministry of it, by which he intreateth all those to whom it is Preached, to be reconciled to God; but for those whom he hath ordained to life, he powerfully and effectually worketh in them by the Spirit of his Grace, by which their hearts (though they may for a time oppose and resist) yet are subdued to the obedience of faith, and drawn unto Christ, and by which also being come to Christ, they are *drawn* after him, being by his power through faith preserved to Salvation. Now whether is the Love of God more seen to mankind in the certain Salvation of many, (though comparatively but few) and ordering of causes accordingly: Or in such an ordering of causes, as it was possible notwithstanding any thing God had done for man, all might have perished: And whether is God more glorified by our predication of him, as one, who though from all eternity he knew who would believe and live holily, and who would not; yet left it possible that all men should believe if they would. Or by the predication of him, as one who knowing all things, because he willed them (so being the first cause of all good in the creature) ordered all things according to the good pleasure of his own will. In the mean time this *Drawing Grace* which we maintain, infinitely commendeth the Love of God to those who are thus drawn, if we consider

1. *The infinite distance of God from the creature:* He is a self-sufficiency to himself, and in order to his happiness needed not the company of any creatures: Now if there were no more in *drawing grace* than some would make, drawing with the *Cords of a Man*, intreating and persuading Souls to be reconciled to God, his love might be just matter of admiration and astonishment: Who are we that God should treat us, and send Embassadors to intreat us to be reconciled unto God? If the Lord had only sent to us to give us warning of a wrath to come, and timely notice to flee from it, leaving us meerly to our own *wills*, whether we would hear, or forbear, accept, or refuse. This had been love above the usual mercy of men, who do not usually spend much time in treating, and intreating those enemies whom they can easily crush, and tread under foot. Yet had God

done no more for our Souls, though in this he had shewed great love, yet we through the natural stubbornes, and perverseness of our hearts, had been undone for ever. How many are in a high Road to ruine and eternal destruction, whom God hath been thus intreating, and beseeching many years?

2. But now that the Lord should not only do this, but *put forth an act of power*, though not saving them against their wills, yet making them *willing to be saved*, and in order to it not verbally, but really willing to receive Christ as tendred to them in the Gospel, so as not only to be saved by him, but to submit to those Laws and Rules, in the observance of which they shall obtain Salvation; and not only so, but that God should assist the Soul in the performance of these acts; not only giving it to will, but to do also. This certainly must transcendently commend the love and goodness of God to those Souls that have experienced such grace. That God doth not so much for all, speaks indeed *severity* to them, but that he doth it for any, speaks his unspeakable goodness and good will to their Souls. I say, that he doth not this for all, speaks to them *severity*, but yet *justice*, and that not only in regard of that stock of *sufficient grace*, wherewith our Pro-parent was intrusted, which being lost, God is under no obligation to restore: but also in regard that God never denieth his *special Grace*, until the Soul hath abused his *common Grace*.

3. Nay lastly, That the *Lord should take care of our Souls* after that we are once *brought to Christ*, that he should put *his fear into our hearts*, to keep us from *departing from him*, and never depart from us to do us good, that *drawing Grace* should follow us all the days of our life. This certainly is the heighth of Divine Love, more than this God could not have done for any Soul; those for whom he hath done this, must be *highly beloved*. What now is left for such a Soul to do, but to strive after perfection? to live in a constant eying this All-sufficient God, this Fountain of all Fulness, and living in dependance upon him: To live in a continual thanksgiving to, and love for that God who hath dealt thus graciously with it, and in a daily care not to grieve that holy Spirit by which it was first drawn to Christ, and by which it is sealed to the day of Redemption, and guided and kept, that it doth not slip fatally. O love you the Lord all ye his Saints! Let *drawing Grace* find no *resistency*, no *resistance* from any of your Souls. God hath done for you more than others; what will you do for God? nay, what can you do for that God,

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who hath not only called, but pluckt you out of the horrible Pit? Take the Cup of Salvation, and be for ever praising the Lord.

Use 6. Again, we may from hence learn, though not the *proximate*, yet *a true and remoter cause why the Gospel is preached* to many so *ineffectually*. Our Saviour tells us, *Many are called, but few are chosen*. *Isaiah* cried out, *Who hath believed our report? to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed? Paul* in his Preaching was to some, *the savour of life unto life*; to others, *the savour of death unto death*. When Christ himself Preached some *believed*, others were *hardened*. Whence so great a difference, when the Word was the same, the Preachers the same, both to those that believed, & to those who were hardened: They had all reasonable Souls; those Souls had all the same powers, the same faculties; I mean, powers and faculties that had the same virtues. We see the same in the experience of every day. Indeed there may be some Preaching, that may bear no better proportion, to the instruction of the ignorant, or the conviction of a sinner, and turning him from his sinful courses, than the *Clay and Spittle* had to cure the blind man's eyes, from which no such effect could have flowed, but by a miracle; but where there is the same *Scriptural*, spiritual, lively, powerful Preaching, we see this effect. Two sit in the same seat, one's heart is changed, the other's is not; one goes on in his loud courses, and perisheth for ever, the other is converted, his heart changed; whence is this difference? Is it from him that *willeth*, or *him that runneth* (think you) or *from him that calleth*? *from him that sheweth mercy* because, and on whom *he will shew mercy*? We will grant that the one doth not make that use of God's *common Grace* which he might, and therefore the Lord righteously with-holds his *special Grace*. But could not the Lord, if he pleased, influence the one Soul as well as the other, to make a good use of his common Grace? Hath God (think we) no influence upon men, inclining their hearts to make a due use of his common Grace? When men have said what they can, the conversion of every Soul is the effect of the Lord's drawing; and when the Lord doth not draw, the Soul doth not, cannot, come or run. The natural man hath many things which draw him another way, and God is not pleased to put forth his power upon the Soul. Indeed properly nothing but our own lusts draw us another way, but our natural passions are inflamed several waies. You have an instance of the principal of them in the Parable of the Marriage-Feast which the King made for his Son, recorded by *Luke*, c. 14. 18, 19, 20. & *Matth.* 22. v. 5, &c. *A certain great man*

man (*Matthew* calls him a *King*) made a great Supper, (*Matthew* calls it a *Marriage for his Son*) he *bade many*, saith *Luke*; *he sent forth his Servants to call them that were bidden to the Wedding*, saith *Matthew*. *They would not come*, (saith *Matthew*) *They all with one consent began* (saith *Luke*) *to make excuse*. They were invited by potent Arguments; *I have prepared my Dinner, my Oxen, and my Fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come you to the Marriage*, *Matth.* 22. 4. In general it is said, *They would not come*; *they made light of it*; *they made excuse*? What drew them another way. *Lu.* 14. 18. *The first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it, I pray thee have me excused? And another said, I have bought five yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them. And another said I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come*; who is this King? Even the *King of Kings*, the *Lord of Lords*; who is his Son but the Lord Jesus Christ? Of whom he said; *This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*. What are the *fatlings kill'd*, how are all *things ready*? the Lord Jesus Christ hath dyed, there is in his blood a sufficiency of merit. The Gospel is Preached, the Ministers of Christ are sent out to offer reconciliation with God, union with Christ to all those to whom the Gospel is Preached; a great part of them will not come, they make light of the tender of Grace and Salvation, what is the matter that they find any difficulty to make hast to their own happiness? The three great causes are mentioned, and they fall under these three heads. 1. *Worldly enjoyments*. 2. *Worldly imployments*. 3. Sensual and sensible satisfactions; these have all a power upon man by reason of that lust which is in them, either the *lust of the Eye*, or *the lust of the flesh*, or *the pride of life*.

1. *Wordly enjoyments hinder some*. The first said, *I have bought a Farm, I must go and see it*; The young man, *Mat.* 19. seems to have a good mind to follow Christ. Christ bids him first *go and sell all that he had, and he should have riches in Heaven*. The Text saith, he went away sorrowful, *for he had great possessions*, *Mat* 19. 22. Our Saviour upon it saith to his Disciples, *Verily I say unto you, a rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, then for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Another Evangelist expounds this by *one that trusteth in his riches*. The desire of getting riches, and the over-much complacency, and delight of the Soul in them, together with mens valuing themselves upon them, are three great drawers of the Soul from Christ. The first as it over-ruleth the Soul to an *evil* cove-

covetousness, oppression, and unjust methods and measures of gain, and so brings him into the herd of those that shall never come into Heaven. The Second as it melteth the Soul into sensuality, and hindereth those acts of *Self-denial*, and *Mortification*, without which a man cannot be Christs Disciple, nor ever come into Heaven. The 3d, *As it swells the Soul* with pride; and lifts it above religious Duties, which it judgeth too mean for it, suited to poor people, but not to Persons of its degree and quality in the world.

2. *Worldly Employments* hinder others. Alas! That Men and Women should be too busie to attend the making their calling and election sure, but so it is. The second said, *I have bought five yoke of Oxen, and I must go and prove them.* Some Men and Women are not at leasure to be saved as they are not at leasure to *pray*, that the thoughts of their heart might be forgiven them, or to *hear that their Souls might live. Licitis perimus.* As many perish by the ill uses of lawful things, as by reaching their hands to absolutely forbidden fruit; *more die by meat then by poison.* Though the Drunkard cannot keep the narrow path that leads to Eternal life, yet what hindereth, but that a sober Person should? what more lawful then to buy five yoke of Oxen, and to try, and use them, when we have them? It is the command of God, that *In the sweat of our Face we should eat our Bread.* Ah! But if the Cart draws to the Market, when God calls to the Solemn Assemblies of his People, the five yoke of Oxen prove of fatal consequence. *O cupide negotiator* (saith *De-Ponte*) when a man hath so much business about his body, that he hath no leasure to attend the business of his Soul, he is over-busy, and makes his ἔργον πλεῖστον when his Trading is so much in the world, as is inconsistent with having his πολίτευμα his conversation in Heaven, then much business makes him mad, and his time is but (like *Domitians*) spent in catching of flies, instead of attending the concerns of the Roman Empire, the concerns I mean of his immortal Soul; I would have the active men of the world sometimes think whether they have not too much business to manage, and go to Heaven too. This made our holy Mr. *Palmer* bless God who had call'd him to the work of the Ministry which drew mens minds towards God, whereas most other imployments divert the Soul from God.

3. *Sensual and sensible satisfactions*, are another kind of things which

which potently seduce and draw off the Soul from God. Another said, *I have married a Wife, and cannot come.* Never yet any mist of Heaven, but had some impediments or other; the others prayed to be excused, this guest saith, *I cannot come*, *Riches* draw hard, so do worldly business and imployments; but ah! Pleasures, pleasures are the bane of Souls, like the silly Bee, they are *drowned in their own Hony.* Gods voice grates upon the Ears accustomed to Musick, and all manner of delightful sounds. A bleeding crucified Christ is a most ingrateful object to the wanton Eye that hath been used only to behold pleasant things. Yet it is to be observed that he doth not say, I am going to an Harlot but *I have married a Wife*, & cannot come. Still, *Licitis perimus.* These are those potent Seducers, which suiting with the strong & natural byas, & inclinations of our hearts draw off from Christ. Man is too weak to withstand the force of them, God doth not please upon every Soul to whom the Gospel is Preached, to put forth his power. Hence Souls of the same species, under the same means, and assistances, yet incline and move diversely. There is, there can be nothing in man that makes him in practice to differ from his Neighbour. Let not therefore he who is thus *drawn*, glory, for it is God who hath drawn him. Nor let any *murmur* on the behalf of those who are not thus *drawn.* Grace is the Lords own, he may do with it what he pleaseth; *Augustine* saith well concerning Grace, *the cause why it is given to one, not to another, may be hidden and secret, but unjust it cannot be.* In the mean time (as I said before) I believe at the great day there will be not be found so much as one Soul that shall be able to accuse God for the denial of this Grace, this powerful, and effectual Grace, who hath not voluntarily resisted, and vexed the holy Spirit of God in the use of that common Grace, for the want of which he hath no reason to complain; and shall not the Lord be justified in refusing to *draw those*, who have first suffered a base lust (which was in their power to have resisted) to draw them away from him? Shall not this *powerful Grace* be righteously denied to them, who have suffered themselves by a revel to be drawn from a Sermon?

2. Further yet we may from hence have an account of those many *startings aside, from God of which his own People are guilty, and the inequality of gracious motions, and actions.* Some seem to us to stand still, others to move very slowly, others with great heavi-

heavineſs, and difficulty. All this difference depends upon the inequal diſtributions of Divine Grace, for although when this Oil is once in the *Cruiſe*, it ſhall not fail from it, till Grace ſhall be ſwallowed up in glory, but ſo much influence of Grace ſhall be continued as to juſtify the Lord in his promiſe, *that he will never depart from the Soul to do it good, and he will put his fear into the heart, that it ſhall never depart from him*; and the Soul ſhall be preſerved by the power of God through faith to Salvation, yet there may be, and are great differences as to the degrees of Gods Adminiſtrations. Nor yet poſſibly muſt the blame of theſe Souls *not running*, reſt upon God for *not drawing*? For although the Lord may ſometimes do it upon his prerogative and ſoveraignty,

1. To ſhew the freeneſs of his Grace in all the emanations of it, and that he is under no obligations to meaſure out to every Child an equal portion of the riches of his Grace, but as in the diſpoſal of his other talents of *Riches*, & *common gifts*, he may if he pleaſe make inequal diſtributions as it pleaſeth him, giving out to ſome 10, to others 5, to others but one, ſo he may do as to his Talents of diſtinguiſhing Grace, whiles yet every one hath enough to conduct and preſerve his Soul unto eternal life and happineſs.

2. Secondly, He may do it to lay his people under the potent conviction of this truth, *That their running depends upon his drawing*. God himſelf ſometimes aſſigns this as the reaſon of his ſubſtraction of worldly enjoyments, that they might know who it is that gave them. *Hoſea* 2. 8. 9. *For ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which they prepared for* Baal. *Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my Wool, and my Flax*, &c. Thus alſo the Lord may do as to the diſpenſations of his Grace (that Grace I mean which is not neceſſary to Salvation) did we alwaies find an equal ſtrength againſt our luſts, and to our Spiritual duties, an equal readineſs to, and chearfulneſs in the Service of God, we ſhould attribute too much to our renewed nature, and not know in what a daily derivation from, and dependance upon God, even the beſt Souls live, and that all our freſh ſprings are from him. Did we Sail to Heaven through the Sea of this world, alwaies with a Trade wind, we ſhould not underſtand that the wind of Divine Grace (which is the breathing of the holy Spirit) bloweth

where it listeth. But when we are becalmed in our voyage for the new *Hierusalem*, and forced to lie at Anchor, then we learn that without Christ we can do nothing.

But though this must be said to aver the Soveraignty of God, and to assert his wisdom, yet most ordinarily these *withdrawings are upon some provocations on our parts*, the Clouds in the Heavens are caused from the *Vapours* which arise from the Earth. God can never be so provoked against a justified Soul as to withdraw himself wholly, but he may be, and is oft-time so far provoked, as to withdraw his gradual influences, so as the Soul shall feel that it is not with it as at former times, and cryeth out, *where is my God become?* When the Lord offereth a wind, and the Soul refuseth to open its Sails when he moveth, and the Soul quencheth its motions, and grieveth him in his operations, he many times hides his face from it, & it is troubled; the Soul that hath grieved the quickning Spirit, shall smart alittle for the want of quickning Grace, & complain of dulness, & heaviness, & listlessness to its Spiritual Duty. I say this oft-times, yea most ordinarily is the cause. So as though it wants these divine drawings, yet its want of them, is the punishment of its iniquity.

I shall conclude this discourse with a word of advice, what such Souls should do, under such dispensations.

1. *Search and see whether some late sin, hath not provoked God to these withdrawings.* See if thy conscience (which in this case is thy best informer) doth not tell thee, that such a time thou hadst an impulse or motion to prayer, or such a duty (and that under convenient circumstances) and thou neglectedst it; or offered thee some help, and thou neglectedst it. And now the righteous Lord hath left thee to thy own strength, and thou seest what thou art, and humble thy Soul before God, and renew thy covenant with him.

2. If thou canst not find that any such blot hath clave to thy Soul, *yet acknowledge the Lords wisdom, the freeness of his grace*, and his righteousness in his dispensations. We must allow God to do many things in infinite wisdom, and righteousness, though we cannot see or understand it, we must not look in this life to understand the reason of Gods works. It is enough for us to know that he hath done it, and that all his works are done in wisdom and righteousness.

3. Take heed of *lowring thy Sails*, when thou *thinkest the wind abates.*

abates. This you know is contrary to the methods of Mariners; I am sure it is contrary to the wisdom of Christians; keep thy heart at such a time with the most diligence, working and striving against sin. Tow thy Ship if thou canst not Sail as at other times. Go if thou canst not run, and keep thy Soul ready for a wind, whenever God will please to send it.

4. Fourthly, *Beg the returns of the blessed Spirit.* Tell God of thy Souls weakness, or the strength of thy corruptions, or temptations; say unto God as *Jehosaphat* said in another case; Lord I have a mighty host coming against me, I know not what to do, I have no strength against it, but my Eyes are unto thee.

5. After this, I know nothing more to be done, but a patient *waiting for God, according to the resolution of the Church,* Isaiah 8. 17. *I will wait upon him, that hides his face from the house of* Jacob, *I will look for him.*

Sermon XX.

Canticles 1. 4.

Draw me, and We will run after thee.

I Am dwelling yet upon the first *Proposition* of Doctrine I observed from these words, *That the Soul must be drawn to, and after Christ before it will run after him.* (It is a great point, and I am willing to make the utmost improvement of it that I can. The improveableness of it for our instruction is all you have yet heard.

In the next place, certainly there may be made some *improvement of this notion,* to assist us to judge *concerning our spiritual state,* concerning *faith* and *holiness.* These being from the ordination of God so necessary to Salvation, that without them we cannot see God, mistakes about them are like diseases that affect the vital parts, exceeding dangerous. All that this Doctrine will help us in, as to this particular, is in letting us know, Use 2.

1. That *that faith* which will do the Soul any good as to Eternal Salvation must be (as the Apostle stiles it, *Col.* 2. 12.) a faith of *the operation of God. The work of Faith with power,* as the Apostle speaks, 2 *Thessal.* 1. *v.* 11. It is call'd the *gift of God,* Eph. 2. 8. *Not of our selves,* it is the *gift of God,* Eph. 2. 8. *The work of God,* Joh. 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that you believe on him whom he hath sent.* It is not only *the Commandment of God,* 1 Joh. 3. 23. and the *gift of God,* but the *work, the operation of God,* a work with power, such a faith as is an effect of the Fathers *drawing*? This if duly observed, will go a great way to guide us in this inquiry, it will let us see that that *believing* (which is the mere product of natural powers) is not that coming to Christ, to which the promise of life, and Salvation is annexed. Two things men ordinarily deceive themselves with, as to this business of Faith.

1. *Judging any kind of blind, and languid assent, to the proposition of the Gospel to be that believing, to which the Holy Ghost in Scripture annexeth the promise of Salvation,* A great many know no more by *believing,* but their *agreement that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he was made man, and died for us.* All which, and much more the Devils believe, and yet tremble. I do not think that an *assent to the Proposition of the Gospel,* be the assent what it will, is that *Faith* which *justifieth.* It is not the *Proposition of the Gospel,* but the *Person of the Mediator,* that is the *object* of that *Faith*; some indeed tell us, that *Faith* is an *operative assent,* and by that they have mended the matter: but if the *Person of the Mediator,* not the *Proposition of the Word* be the *formal,* and *proper object of true Faith,* no *assent* can be the justifying act of Faith, for the *Proposition* must be the object of that. There are several kinds of *assent* according to the light in which we see a Proposition. We assent to things oft-times meerly upon report and hear-say, so as the *assent* is a meer humane Faith. Thus most Englishmen assent to this, that there was such a Person as *William the Conquerour.* A thing they can see in no other light than that of humane reports in History; of all other *assents* this is the weakest, and most invaluable, and before we give it, there must appear to us a probability in the thing; upon this account, none but those who judge themselves obliged to believe what the Church saith, and that those Books were written by the order of the Church, believeth or assenteth to the strange stories

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in the *Popish Legends*, because their reason tells them the things are improbable, yea, impossible, without a miraculous operation which they see no reason God should work in such a case, nor will men give their *assents* in such cases, but where they are not much concerned whether the thing be true or false, so as it is equal to them to agree the thing or to deny it. 2. *Men assent to things upon the evidence of ratiocinations*, they form conclusions from principles, and then assent to them. Now in regard our reason is not infallible; this *assent* likewise (though more strong than the other) yet is but *faint* and *incertain*, and *alters* as we see better reason for the contrary. 3. *There is an assent which is given to a Proposition upon the account of a divine revelation.* Now this assent is stronger or weaker, as the *Revelation*, is more *fully, or imperfectly, & incertainly agreed.* A man by a natural power may assent to the *Proposition of the Gospel*, as delivered to him by men: he that thus assenteth doth no more assent to what the Gospel saith of Christ, than to what Histories tell him of what was done by the *Saxon* or *Norman Kings* many hundred years ago. Reason working upon its own principles sheweth us nothing of Christ. The Scriptures are by all Christians generally lookt upon as the Word of God, but no man hath any *certain and firm perswasion that they are so*, but he who *is perswaded of it by the Holy Spirit of God*; all arguments from *tradition* and *reason*, have their incertainties, and though they are useful to make it probable to others, yet they do not produce a certainty of perswasion in our own Souls; hence the assent to such *Propositions* as are only revealed in Scripture, must also be faint and incertain, and consequently not operative, or very incertainly operative; so that although it may produce something of practice, whiles the fit of assent is upon the Soul, yet it produceth no *steady, certain* constant practice; so as though it should be granted, that a *practical assent* to the Proposition of the Gospel, be true justifying faith, to which is annexed the pardon of sin, yet if by it we mean such an agreement of our minds to the truth, as produceth a certain, steady, constant or ordinary practice and course of life, conformable to the propositions of truth which we agree, as this will imply trusting, and relying on Christ for life and salvation, so it is such as is the *operation of God in the Soul*, and that not in a way of *common providence* (as our abilities, to *speak* or move are) but in a way of *special favour* and *working*, for mans *agreeing* to

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the holy Scriptures to be the *Word* of God, firmly and steadily, being the reason why he agrees the truth of the propositions which are revealed in it alone, and that being the special work of God in Souls that shall be saved, of necessity such also must be the assent to the Propositions that are revealed in it, and which can be seen by the Soul in no other light. So as indeed I do not think there is much in it more than a strife about words, or at least a very great nicety, whether true justifying Faith be *a practical assent* to the *Propositions* of the *Gospel*, or a *reliance on the Person of the Mediator*, or rather both; for a *practical assent* doth necessarily infer a reliance on the Person of the Mediator: Admitting that this is one Proposition of the Gospel, *Acts* 4. 12. *That there is no Salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under Heaven amongst men, whereby we must be saved*; and that the Soul in its practice of holiness, hath any Eye to the recompence of reward, it is impossible there should be any *practical assent* (to use the term of some) that is, any assent to the Proposition, that shall produce any truth, or constancy of practice, without a reliance upon, and trusting to the Person of the Mediator; and this must be the special work, and powerful operation of God in, and upon the Soul. But now if men make any kind of languid, weak and incertain *assent* to the Gospel Faith, and think that they have *true Faith*, because they agree the truth of the Propositions of Scripture, they may miserably deceive their own Souls; a Man by a mere natural power may as well agree, that there was such a one as *Jesus of Nazareth* once in the world, who went about doing good, exhorting men to a good life, and was Crucified, *&c.* as that there was in *England* a *William the Conqueror*, or any thing else that is to be found in other Books of tolerable credit, and reputation in the World. Or if men think that they do truly believe, because they agree many propositions of the Gospel, which are evident in the light of *Reason*, they again deceive themselves, here may be nothing of the *operation of God* in this faith. Nay if they agree the Propositions of the Gospel, because they are revealed there, and in the mean time do not agree the Scriptures to be the *Word of God*, but look upon them in the same rank with human writings, or only by an *human faith* agree them to be the Word of God, because the Church hath so deliver'd, and transmitted them, here is all this while no thing of the *special operation of God*. Nor will

this

this *agreement* produce any *steadiness* and *firmness of practice*, commensurate to the Revelation, but only *commensurate* to the nature of the *Assent*, which being not fixed, & constant, nor it may be, not *universal*, but to some part only of the *revelation*, must necessarily bring forth no more than a *faint*, *partial*, and *incertain*, *practice*. Hence it is that Hypocrites may do many things contained in the law, and at one time be more warm than at other times. But if thy *Assent* be the special operation, thou assentest to the whole *revelation*, because God hath fixed in thy Soul a persuasion that it is from him who cannot lie, it is also steady and fixed; and tho some doubts may possibly incumber thee sometimes, yet they hold not long, and thou firmly and generally (with allowance for the frailty and infirmity of human nature, endeavourest to live up to the whole of that duty, which the *revelation* imposeth upon thee, which thou canst not do, without relying on Christ, and him alone for Salvation, and having a respect to all the Commandments of God. And indeed, herein that agreement or assent which is the *special work of God* in the Soul, differs from that which is but a meer *natural action*. 1. *In that it is more fixed, certain, and universal*; and this must be so; for our assent is according to our light, we must first see, before we agree the truth of a proposition, now the light of the holy Spirit is without doubt the clearest and brightest light. Our natural reason gives us but a dim light, as to matters of Faith. 2. *In that it layeth a stronger obligation to practice.* Reason will tell us, that the more firmly we believe the truth of Propositions, holding forth *rewards* and *punishments* relating to our practice, the stronger we shall find our obligation to practice in order to the obtaining such rewards, or avoiding such punishments. 3. *In that it layeth an obligation to a more universal practice.* The obligation to practice riseth no higher than the *assent*, so as if there be any duty to which we do not agree, our assent obligeth to no practice of that. Now the holy Spirit persuades us of the truth of the whole revelation, and that in the fullest and truest sense. Hence it is that the true believer is more warm and universal in his obedience, than it is possible another should be, because his assent unto the truth, is from a quite differing light, and a quite differing work of God, the assent of the former proceeding but from a common work of God in nature, the latter from a work of special grace by the

Spirit

Spirit of God upon the Soul. I will not much contend with those who will have true Faith to be a *practical Assent* to the *Proposition of the Gospel*, if they by *Assent* mean a *firm* and *steady* Assent; and by *practical*, such an *Assent* as obligeth strongly to an *universal* practice of whatsoever is revealed as our Duty. 1. Because I know a *reliance upon Christ for eternal Salvation, must be the effect of such an Assent*. 2. Because I know *there can be no reliance on Christ without such a prævious Assent to the Proposition of the Gospel*. 3. Because I know *there can be no such thing without the mighty Power of God upon the Soul*. So that in this sense the Soul must be *drawn by the Father*, before it come to Christ. Only let none deceive themselves, (as to this point of true Believing) by fancying such an Assent to the Doctrine of the Gospel, *true Faith*, wherein God hath no further concern, than as he influenceth acts of Humane Nature flowing from that order of operations which he hath set in all rational Souls. True Faith must be more than this.

2. As to *Faith*, men are also prone to cheat themselves by calling their *Natural presumption Faith*; we say *Faith* lies in a *resting*, and *reliance on Christ*. Now many will tell us they rest and rely on Christ, and yet it is no difficulty to evince they do but presume and not believe. Resting and relying on Christ for Salvation, must be the *Father's drawing*. Natural presumptions are meerly from our selves. Every man is willing to hope well for, and to propheſie good unto himself. Hence living under the publication of the Gospel, and having heard of an *eternal Life* and *Salvation*, and this to be had through Christ, and by resting on him, many naturally cry, they rest on Christ, and trust in him, and him alone. And our Saviour lets us know, that men may die with such confidences, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. Now there is a resting and reliance on Christ, which is the *Operation* of *God*, yea and the mighty work of God upon the Soul, and this many a poor Soul finds that lives months, and years, under the Spirit of bondage, before it can rest on Christ, and quietly commit it self unto him; and there is a resting, which is no more than a *natural hope, or confidence*, arising either from the Souls natural desire of good to it self, or from its *ignorance of the true grounds of a true resting and reliance*: And indeed by this may these two be distinguished and known asunder, That *resting and reliance upon Christ for any spiritual and eternal blessing, which is the Operation of God, is alwaies bottomed on a Promise, and testified by a life suitable to the condition upon which that Promise is made*. These two things are alwaies

wales in it. 1. I say *first it is founded upon a Promise*; for all Grace, and Eternal Life being the gift of God, it is as vain a thing for any to be confident they shall have it, without God's revelation of his Will as to it with reference to them; as it is for any man to pretend a confidence, and trust in another for the making him rich with a great part of his Estate, when that other never so declared his mind to him, or any one else. And 2. *The Promises being not made to persons by name, but to persons that do thus & thus, it is altogether as unreasonable for any to pretend a rest and confidence in Christ for the collation of those spiritual blessings, as it had been for any Commanders in the Jewish Army, having heard* Saul's *declaration of his Will, That whosoever killeth* Goliah, *should have his Daughter to Wife, should have promised himself* Saul's *Daughter without incountring the Philistine.* Now this resting and relying on Christ, (which is the only true reliance) is so difficult by reason of our former sins, and daily infirmities of humane nature, and the lapses and backslidings we are guilty of, that no man thus comes to Christ until he be *drawn.* Thus far I have shewed you how far this discourse may be useful to guide us in our enquiry whether we be *drawn and come to Christ yea*, or no, directing you to distinguish true Faith, both from a *faint* and *languid assent*, and from a natural presumption of our good Estate with reference to Eternity.

2. But it may be further useful also to try your *holiness*. That also must be the effect of *Drawing Grace.* There are two usual mistakes about holiness.

1. The first is when what we *usually call Moral Virtue* is called holiness.

2. When we mistake it for a *formal running a round of Religious Duties.*

I say first, When we mistake holiness, for what we usually call *Moral Virtue*, or Moral Righteousness. I put in those words [we usually call] because I perceive some modern Writers (possibly because pinched with their Arguments, who have contended for something else besides Moral Virtue to be necessary to salvation) have extended the notion of *Moral Virtue* far beyond what *Aristotle* and the rest of the Philosophers learnt us to understand by that name; and do not only bring *Faith* within the compass of it, but will pretend it to be necessary to it, that the action to be done should be performed from a *Principle of Faith*, and *Love*, and *Obedience*, and directed to the Glory of God as their end. These acts and actings our Fore-father-

were wont to call *Grace*; but to let us know that those in our days who have inlarged the acts of *Morality*, mean no more, than what men may do, by nature, having no more than the motives of the Gospel, and the assistances of the Spirit, common to all to whom the Gospel is Preached, therefore they well call these things *Moral Virtues*. As to Moral Virtue in the latter notion of it, it cannot be mistaken for holiness, for it is so. It is in the antientest, and most proper notion of it, that I am speaking to it. So *Chastity*, *Sobriety*, *Temperance*, *Liberality*, *Justice*, are moral habits, and the *acts of them* are acts of Moral Virtue and Righteousness; whether he that doth them doth them out of any Principle of *Faith*, or *Love*, or *Obedience*, or with any respect to the Glory of God, yea or no; but if any thinks this is *holiness*, he is wonderfully mistaken, for it is essentially necessary to an *act of holiness*, that it should be done from a *Principle of Faith*, the Soul being fully perswaded, that it is the *Will of God*, and in *Obedience to his Will*, eying his command in our action. And 3. Proposing to our selves the *Honour and Glory of God* for our end. So that though the same acts be done, yet if they be done from other Principles, and to other ends, they may be acts of *Moral Virtue* (that is, under the government, and conduct, and guidance of reason) but no acts of holiness. Besides, there are many actions which are our duties, in obedience to the Will of God, the reasonableness of which is not to be concluded (nor ever was concluded by the men of reason amongst the Heathens) from any other Principle than this, That it is the highest reason that we should do what God commands us. So that to reduce our duty as Christians, to the Precepts of what we have used to call *Moral Virtue*, is partly to secure our selves from a great part of our duty, by that Art, and partly to do what we do out of such Principles as God will never more thank us for, than we will do our Servants, for doing what we would have them do, but they do out of respect to themselves, without any regard to the pleasing of, or obeying us. Now, though it be true, that acts of *Moral Virtue* (that is conformable to natural reason) may be performed by men without any special influence of the Holy Spirit: Yet without such a *Drawing Influence* the Soul will neither do those acts, from any *true Principle*, or *to any right end*: Nor yet do many things which are required of us (under the notion of holiness) in order to eternal life. Besides, the *holiness* required of us is in *all our conversation*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. Now it is observed of the greatest Moralists, that they failed here, and indulged themselves in some things of immorality,

yet

yet went for *morally virtuous men*, if they excelled in *Justice*, though they failed in *Temperance*, *Sobriety*, and *Chastity*, &c. And indeed herein is the *drawing of Divine Grace* with respect to holiness seen, and from hence to be judged. If the Soul finds it self under a constant obligation to whatsoever God hath commanded, and that because God hath commanded it, and that it might please him, and do what is acceptable in his sight. This no Soul doth from a meer natural power; and though the renewed Soul be made willing, yet to keep on in this course it stands in need of the daily excitings and quickenings, and assistances of the Holy Spirit.

2. A second mistake which men may be deceived by, as to *Holiness*, is when they take *a formal performance of Religious duties* to be it. *Holiness* lieth in *Godliness*, and *Righteousness*. And as men may mistake *Righteousness* towards men for *Holiness*, so they may as easily mistake a *Form of Godliness*, which may consist (as the Apostle teacheth us) with a *denial of the Power of it* to be Holiness. *Godliness* in the sense I am speaking to it, signifieth the performance of those acts of homage and worship, which God hath required of us to his more immediate Service and Glory. This lieth in the performance of some external actions to God immediately, according to the prescription of his Divine Will, which respecting the manner, as well as the matter, all such actions as are meer *bodily labour*, are indeed no *Godliness*, but meer *formal* performances, and things so short of obedience to the Commands of God, that God in Scripture is said not to require them, that is, not them alone, or them performed in such a manner, as *Isa.* 1. 12. *When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations; Incense is an abomination unto me; the New Moons, and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies, I cannot away with, even the Solemn Meetings: Your New Moons, and your appointed Feasts, my Soul hateth; they are a trouble to me.* God had appointed all these things; he had commanded they should tread his Courts, bring Oblations, offer Incense, keep New Moons, and Sabbaths; but all these things ought to have been done out of love to God, with a Faith in Christ, and with pure hearts; not being so performed, they were no Godliness, but meer abomination unto God. The case with us under the Gospel is the same, though our Acts of homage there prescribed be of another, more reasonable and spiritual nature. God hath required of us to *pray*, to *praise*, to *hear his Word*, to *partake of his Supper*. He hath also prescribed us the *manner* in which we ought to

do these acts; in *Faith*, in *Obedience*, with the *intention of our minds*, *attention of our thoughts*, *fervency of spirit*. Separate the more external acts from these, they are no better than *formal performances*, *bodily exercises*, neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to our selves: If men will call these Godliness, or Holiness, it is a great mistake. The external acts are indeed such as men that live under the Gospel may be excited to perform, and may perform without any *special influence of Grace*, by vertue of his natural powers and abilities, and the common Grace of God not denied to any: But when they are done, without due affections, and principles, and inward motions of the heart correspondent to the nature of the actions, according to the revelation of the Divine Will, they are no Holiness, but Hypocrisie; and thus they cannot be performed without the *assistance and influence of special Grace*. Thus from this notion of the necessity of *Christ's drawing* both with reference to our *first coming to Christ for life*, and further *following him*, walking with him, and running after him. Christians may be able to judge both concerning the *Truth* of their *Faith*, and also of their *Holiness*. If either be true, they must be the effect of *Divine special Grace*, and more than any can do from the powers of Nature, even the best educated Nature, not renewed, changed and influenced by special and distinguishing grace. I am fully of their mind who think that those Souls, who are no further changed and reformed, or converted, than might be from the power of Nature rationally improving *Moral Principles, and Gospel Motives and Arguments*, cannot be saved: But yet I am so charitable, as to think that many may be saved who *think* they have no other *conversion than this*; the workings of the Spirit of God upon our Souls are so indiscernable and internal, that we may possibly mistake them for the *workings* of meerly our own powers and faculties, under the advantages of the Gospel; but they must be more than such, or else (as I have before said) man is the first Author of all *spiritual good*, both with respect to *action* and *fruition*, to himself, and clearly his own Saviour, and must make himself to differ from another, and that by the highest, and most spiritual difference, and one man's Soul must have different and inequal vertues from the Soul of his Brother, whose Soul is of the same species, and hath the same faculties. But I have dwelt long enough upon this branch of Application.

Let every one now by this *Examine himself*, whether the *Faith* that he thinks he hath, be a meer *Assent* to the Proposition of the Gospel, upon the *Evidence* of it he hath had from the Church, or from men,

men, or a meer languid incertain Assent, from probable Arguments of Reason, or a meer *presumption* bottomed upon no Promise. Or, whether it be a *firm and fixed Assent* to the Truths of the Gospel understood by him, conjoyned with a *reliance* upon the Person of the Mediator, clearly revealed in the Gospel, as the only Saviour of Man, and producing an endeavour in all things to live up to the condition of the Promise? Whether the *Holiness* which he thinketh his Soul hath arrived at, lieth in a meer *Moral Righteousness*, a forbearance of gross and scandalous courses of sin, and a doing such acts of Justice and Charity, as a man may do from the meer improvement and conduct of reason, and a meer *Formality of Godliness*, a performance of such acts of homage, as God hath prescribed, without respect to the manner in which God hath willed them to be performed.

If your pretended Faith and Holiness be no more, trust not to them as Evidences that you are *come to Christ*; all this may be without any thing of this drawing; your Faith is no more than that mentioned, *Matth.* 7. 22. where our Saviour tells you that *many* (pretendedly trusting in, and relying upon him, as may appear by what they said) should say to him in that day; *Lord! Lord! Have we not propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name have caſt out Devils, and in thy Name done many wonderful works? to whom he would ſay, I never knew you, depart from me, you workers of iniquity.* God had never promised Heaven & Salvation, to a *propheſying in his Name*, nor to a *casting out of Devils*, so as their confidence, or reliance on, or in Christ, was the growing up of a *Rush without Mire*; a trusting without a ground, or bottom: Your Holiness and Righteousness is no more than that of the Pharisee, who gloried, *Luk.* 18. 11, 12. That *he was not as other men were, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers*; he *fasted twice a week, and gave Alms of all that he poſſeſſed.* Our Saviour saith, he went away not *justified.* And *Matth.* 5. 20. *Except your Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, you can never enter into the Kingdom of God.* Say to your selves severally, My Soul, thou must one day come before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and begging for admittance into Heaven, thou wouldest be loth to hear the Lord in that day say to thee, *Depart from me, I know thee not.* My Soul, what hast thou more to trust to than they had? Canst thou say any more than Lord! I am not as other men? *I am no Swearer, no Drunkard, no Reviler, no Extortioner, no Whoremonger*; *Lord, I faſt often, I go to prayers often, and to Church often*, to hear the Word; if thou hast no more to say, the Pharisee had

had as much. The interest of a man's own body, or estate, the examples of other men, the credit and applause of the world, may move a reasonable Soul, under no other power than that of reason, nor other influence, than that which all within the compass of the Church, where the Gospel is Preached, may carry thee thus far, without any influence of powerful, special Grace.

Use 3. Further yet, this notion of Truth, may help to relieve many good Souls, who are discouraged, *either because they seem to themselves to stick in the New Birth*: Or, *because they find in themselves a great weakness to spiritual duties*: Or, *impotency in the resistance of their own intrinsick motions to sin, or forein temptations.* As easie a thing as some make it to believe; many Souls smitten of God, and truly afflicted under the sense of sin, find it one of the most difficult things in the world, to give such a *firm and steady Assent to the Revelation of the Gospel*, as will produce in their Souls any grounded confidence, and resting on the Lord *Jesus Christ* as our Saviour, and shall be productive of such a change of heart and life as the Gospel requireth. Hence, though they be truly wounded in the sense of sin, and have taken up resolutions through the Grace of God, to sin no more as they have done formerly; yet they cannot tell how to bring their Souls to any fiducial adherence and rest on the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are still full of doubts and fears concerning their spiritual and eternal state; the guilt of their sins is upon their consciences, and they pine away, in, and under it; but they are not able to reach out an hand to the Promise in and through Christ; they have deep sights of their misery, but they can see no hope, no mercy at all in God for them. Now to such Souls as these, this is some relief to consider, *That no man cometh to the Son unless the Father draweth him.* It is no wonder that thou who hast formerly been not a stranger only, but an enemy to God, canst not at first come unto him, without a powerful influence of Divine Grace; when as those who are brought home to God, stand in need of a daily Divine Influence to enable them to walk with him, and to run after him. This is not the weakness, or frowardness, or badness of thine heart alone; it is the condition of every lapsed Soul. And here the thinking Soul will come to feel the wound given it by the *Fall of Adam*, and its own *original* corruption. No man hath by nature more aptitude than another to acts truly spiritual. You will say, this is very cold comfort. We are sure, if we be without Christ, we are undone; and what if our hearts be no worse than others were till they were made better by the

Power

Power of Divine Grace, so long as that they are so bad as we cannot come to Christ for life? We have been lying in this state as the *Pool of Bethesda*, under the Ordinances of God, many months and years; others within the time have been rolled in; here we lie still as weak as ever. I will but offer two things to the relief of a Soul thus complaining.

1. *That every Christian drawn to Christ, doth not presently discern it. Faith*, is one thing, the sense of that Faith is another thing. Many a *Child of Light* doth not walk in the Light. I would hope charitably, that that Soul which complains that it cannot believe, and seriously bemoans its impotency, doth believe; a serious desire to believe, is generally the fruit of believing. I would say to the Soul that thus complaineth, Thou art awakened to consider an Eternity, and that thy Soul is hastening towards an Eternity; yet thou dost not despair, thou hast some hope: In what is thy hope? What dost thou trust in, with reference to thy Eternal Happiness? Such a Soul will easily see, that its *Moral Righteousness*, or *Formal Performance of Duties*, are not the things it hopeth in; Where then is thy hope, (those degrees of hope which keep thee out of the Pit of despair,) fixed? Where can it be fixed but in Christ exhibited in the Promises of the Gospel, so as thou rather complainest for want of sense, than for want of Fa[illegible]

2. *If thou dost but pray, and wait, thou shalt see.* Christ will make thee to see, that he hath drawn thy Soul unto himself. Never poor Soul perished under thy circumstances, that is, heavy loaden under the sense of sin, and weary of its sinful courses, and sensible that it hath no Righteousness wherein it can stand before God, and panting and thirsting after the Lord and his Righteousness. I have alwaies thought that God would not be wanting to any as to his special Grace, that had made the best improvement he could of *common Grace*. But this case riseth higher; God hath begun his good work in thy Soul, and he will perfect it; he hath begun with thee in a way of special Grace, and more shall be added; he hath brought to the birth, and shall he not give strength to bring forth? so as thou hast nothing to do but to pray, to wait upon God in his Ordinances, and to wait for God with patience.

Secondly, I hear others complaining, They would run after God, they would follow the Lord fully; the Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak; they find their corruptions, their temptations so strong, their strength against them so small, that they wonder they hold.

hold out so long, and fear they shall one day fall. They cannot find that they run after Christ; something of duty they do, but with so much dulness and heaviness, as is far from running. Christian! be of good comfort:

1. *The Lord will draw thee*; do what in thee lieth, the Lord will draw thee. *Who* (saith *Paul*) *shall deliver me from this body of death*? He presently subjoyns, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* The Spouse prayeth in Faith, when she saith, *Draw me, and we will run after thee.* If *Abraham* had considered his own body, at that time dead (as to such acts) or the *deadness of* Sarah's *womb*, he had never glorified God by a *strong Faith* in the Promise; *Rom.* 3. 21. He considered none of these, but the Promise only, and concluded, that *what the Lord had promised, he was able to perform.* Thou considerest how busie the Devil is, and what he can do: How *strong thy lusts are*, how weak thou art, and how little thou art able to do. But thou dost not consider what a mighty God can do; what he can do who hath said, *To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have in more abundance.* Thou seest a great Mountain of lusts and corruptions, great Mountains of temptations, and thou art afraid: *But what art thou O great Mountain before the Lord's* Zerubbabel? If it be the Lord's work, who shall let him?

2. Consider, *The Lord may sometimes not draw so* [illegible]*ently as at other times, and our running will bear a proportion to his drawing.* The Mother will never leave the little Child to go wholly alone, for fear it falls; she will alwaies have an hand upon it; but she may sometimes put forth more, sometimes less of the strength of that hand. God never leaveth us wholly to our selves; he knows we cannot stand, or go without him; but he sometimes lets us feel more of his strength, sometimes less.

3. *Going slowly when God slackens his hand, is indeed running*, that is, equivalent to a going faster with a further influence. It is like the *Widdows Mite*, who hath no more to put in. Like *Hezekiah's* chattering like a Crane. Like the voice of *David's* weeping. Like the sorrowful sighings of the Prisoners which God heareth and accepteth.

Sermon XXI.

Cant. 1. 4.

Draw me, and we will run after thee.

IT is a great point that I am upon from the Petition of the Text *Draw me*, viz. *That the Soul must be drawn before it will move toward Christ*, either by *coming to him*, in its first *conversion*, or by *running after him:* I have been some time upon it, I shall now shut up my discourse with some few words of exhortation, which shall respect all Men and Women. 1. *Those that are yet without Christ*, not come *unto him*. 2. Such as *are come unto him*, yet are under obligations to *run after him*. Use 3.

1. To the first I would speak two things. 1. *Never think either of coming to Christ, or running after him in your own natural strength.* It is a rock which many Souls dash, and are eternally split upon. They say not, there is no hope, they have found the life of their hands, therefore they are not grieved. It is one of the most dangerous deceits of a mans heart, for him to say he hath his Spiritual life in his own hands, to think that he hath a power within himself, and can turn to Christ, when he pleaseth, or to bless himself as in a good condition, when indeed his condition is very bad. Let me a little shew you the mischief of this errour.

1. If I could say no more, than *that it is a false persuasion*, yet that were enough to defame it to every reasonable Soul, the Soul instead of having *its life*, hath no more than a *lie* in its right hand; the object of our understanding is truth, falshood is what it ought naturally to reject and abhor. Men are but in an ill condition when they are forced *to make lies their refuge, and to hide themselves under falshood*, Is. 28. 15. What a sad state is that Soul in, that is put to make a *lie its refuge*, and to hide itself from the reflections of its conscience, under falshood! His conscience tells

him he perisheth for ever, if he abideth in the State he is in, what relieves him? he thinks he can repent, and believe, and turn to God when he listeth, and so goeth on in his sinful courses, stoppeth his Ears against the voice of the Lords Charmers. Here is now a lie made the refuge of the Soul.

2. But *Secondly*, a further mischief lies here, *That whereas the drawings of Divine Grace do usually follow some means, and endeavours to be used on our part. and that in time, this false perswasion, takes us off the timely use of such means, and endeavours, upon the use of which God ordinarily comes in with the further power of his Grace.* Admit a thing necessary to be done, and so allowed by us, yet if it be laborious, painful, or any way ingrateful as to the means to be used in the doing of it, and it be a thing which we know, or believe we can do when we will, we are never hasty to do it, but very apt to defer and put it off from time to time, and to omit those means, the use of which is not pleasing to our sense; whereas if we be convinced that the thing is not in our own power, but requires the assistance of another, if we apprehend it necessary for us, tho the *means* be unpleasing, yet we will not neglect the use of them. For example, admit a man sick of some dangerous disease, and he apprehendeth, that without the use of some skilful Physitian he cannot live, though he cannot come at this Physician without a laborious journey, and knows the Physick will not please his pallat, yet a man will not lose his opportunity, nor neglect taking Physick according to the Physicians prescription; whereas if he apprehends his distemper such, as he knows at any time how to remove, by some means in his own power, he is very prone to put off the use of means from time to time, until possibly it be too late. This is the case of a Soul, perswaded that it hath its life in its own hands, a power in itself when it pleaseth to *repent*, *believe* and *turn to God*; these things being not pleasing to flesh and blood, the Soul is very prone to slight and neglect the means, with which God useth to concur, giving the Soul a power to do these things above what it hath in itself, but now admit a Soul possessed of the *necessity* of *faith*, *repentance*, and *new obedience*, in order to its eternal happiness, and also to know that it cannot do these things without a powerful influence of Divine Grace, which God useth not to give out in the neglect, but in the use of those *means of Grace*, which he hath appointed, especially if it knows that the

Spirit

Spirit of God shall not *always strive with man*, it will neglect no time, no use of means, but in the morning sow its Seed, and not suffer its hand in the Evening to be slack, because it knoweth not which shall prosper, this or that, with what means, or at what time God will concur, *Isaiah* 57. 10. *Thou saidst that thou hadst thy life in thy hands, therefore thou wert not grieved.* The Jews had used all means to make piece, and leagues with other Nations, and had at length obtained it, and thence concluded they had *their life in their hands*; they were well enough, and safe enough, and therefore they were not at all grieved for their sins against God, which was a means in order to their true security. It is even thus with the Soul, did it lie under the powerful conviction of this truth, That of itself it hath no power to repent, believe, or turn to God, it would then be troubled for its sad and miserable estate, and look out for Salvation in and by Christ, waiting upon him in ordinances, and by prayer crying to him to draw it unto himself, but so long as it is possest of an opinion of sufficiency in itself, it neglecteth the timely use of such means as must be used in order to eternal Salvation by, and from Christ, upon this score I conceive it was that Christ told the Pharisees, *Mat.* 21. 32. *That Publicans and Harlots should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before them.* The *Pharisees* said they had their life in their hands, they could save themselves, they were *Lords*, and therefore they would not come to Christ; the Apostle telleth us that the Jews *going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God*, Rom. 10. 3.

3. May it not be doubted whether God will ever *draw that Soul that fancieth that it stands in no need of his drawing?* It is said of God, that *he resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.* What is *Pride* but an *high, and undue opinion of our selves?* Whether it be upon the account of some gifts of common Providence, such as *Riches, Honours*, &c. *or common gifts of the Spirit*, such as *knowledge*, the *gift of prayer*, or *prophecying*, or (which indeed is the worst of all) upon the opinion of some *conceited righteousness in our selves*, or some *spiritual power, and abilities* we have, or judge our selves to have; the latter is *Spiritual Pride*, nor is any thing more opposite to the truth, and Grace of the Gospel; the whole design of the Gospel, is to exalt Christ as the *Lord our righteousness*, and our *strength*, and our great duty is

to accept him in that notion, nor indeed can he be truly received in any other notion; now can it be reasonably imagined, that he whose *arm useth to bring Salvation*, when he looketh and seeth *there is none to save*, should bring *Salvation* to a Soul, that apprehends it hath no need at all of him, he hath done enough for it, in giving it a reasonable Soul, and the *Preaching of the Gospel*. These are now some of those great Evils, that are consequential to this error imbibed by the Soul; but you will say to me: what can a Man or Woman in his or her natural state do in order to his being drawn by Divine Grace? To this I answer,

1. *He may not oppose or set himself against the workings of this Divine Grace.*

2. *He may do some things that may be conducive.*

1. In the first place *do not resist the Grace of God, nor set your selves in opposition to it*; You will say then, can Grace be resisted, did not you tell us it is powerful, and shall be obeyed?

I answer. I did tell you that Grace is powerful, and cannot be *finally resisted*, but it may be a long time resisted and opposed. The holy Spirit, is the most potent agent, and must at last overcome, but it may be vexed and grieved. I know what some will say; what if I do resist, if I do oppose it, if God hath determined me to *Life, and to Grace, as the means*, it shall at last overcome? I answer that is true, but yet it is no vain counsel to give any to advise them to take heed of such resistings, and vexings of the Spirit of God, as it is capable of, and that upon a threefold account.

1. Because *he who thus resisteth the Holy Spirit, justifieth God in his condemnation*, and not putting forth such a power of Grace as shall be effectual of its Salvation; those who plead so highly for a power in man to what is Spiritually good, lay a great stress upon their fancy, that if we do not allow this, we make the destruction of a Sinner to be from God, not from himself, but they do not consider two things. 1. *That whatsoever destruction we derive from* Adam, *is from our selves, for in* Adam *all died* (saith the Apostle.) God is neither bound to restore unto us the Grace he once gave us, and we lost, nor yet unjust in requiring of us the exercise of that power, which we once had of his gift, and have lost through our own default (for the default of our first Parent in whom we all sinned, and dyed was our own.) 2. *That the resistance of the holy Spirit in its more common Grace and operations*

vations is a sufficient clearing of God in the condemnation of Sinners, though he doth not give out his effectual Grace; he hath said, *that to him that hath shall be given.* The sense of which (tho *Mat.* 13. and in the parallel Text it may be *to him that hath any thing of special distinguishing grace, shall be more given of the same nature* and kind yet) is plainly, *Mat.* 25. 29. (where it is used in the exposition of the parable of the Talents) *To him that improveth what he hath,* and may very well be interpreted into a promise of *further Grace* to him that makes a good improvement of common Grace. The justice of Gods judgment upon those of *Hierusalem* was from this manifested to the world. That Christ *would oft-times have gathered them as an Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, but they would not.* If a man must be ruined, yet surely he should not ruine himself.

2. Secondly, *Tho if thou beest one ordained to life, the Grace of God towards thee shall not be finally resisted; yet thy resistances, and opposition may make the new birth, much harder, and more full of pain to thee.* It is a most certain truth, that the foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his, and not one of those whom the Father hath by his Eternal gift given to Christ shall be lost, they may for a time oppose and resist the motions, and knockings of his Spirit, but it shall at last overcome them, but the Soul in its coming unto Christ, usually meets with the *Spirit of bondage, making it to fear before it receiveth the Spirit of adoption, teaching it to cry* Abba *Father.* Now thy opposition, and resistances to the Spirit of Grace may keep thee much longer under the Spirit of bondage; and for this, I appeal to the experiences of all those who have been brought home to Christ, whether they have not found the oppositions and resistances which they have made, to the knocks, and motions of the Holy Spirit, have not lain heavy upon them, before they have been able to discern a gracious acceptation; whether when their faith in Christ hath got above their other sins, the follies, and vanities of their youth, they have not found it stick here. They could hope in Christ, and in the free and infinite Grace of God through him, were it not that they remember, how often they refused the tenders of Grace, and put off the holy Spirit, knocking at the door of their hearts. Now what knowest thou O Christian, but that thou art an *elect vessel,* one *ordained to eternal life,* and *salvation,* if so, thou shalt certainly be brought home to Christ,

and

and be saved, notwithstanding thy present resistance and opposition, but it may be *as through fire*, why shouldest thou make thy new birth more painful, and difficult?

3. Thirdly, *When thy Soul is brought home to God* (if ever thou seest that happy hour) *it will while thou livest be a grief of heart unto thee, to think how long thou didst oppose, and resist the Grace of God, bringing Salvation in the tenders of it to thy Soul.* The People of God, have their sad, and dark hours, as well as their hours of light and comfort, they will tell you from their own experience, that when they reflect a sad Eye upon their former ways, they find nothing lying more sad and heavy upon their Souls, than their so long resisting, and opposing the Grace of God, before they submitted to it, to all their sins they have added this great iniquity, that when the Lord said to them, yet *Believe and you shall be saved*, they to go on in their sinful courses, put off the Spirit of God from day to day, and sent him sad away from their Souls, and why should Christians make themselves matter of trouble and sorrow hereafter, how graciously soever God will deal with their Souls? O therefore let all that wish well to their own Souls, be so far from opposing, or hindering the drawings of Divine Grace, as to do what in them lies in order to the obtaining of them; you will say unto me, what is that, what can we do either, as to the hindering or obtaining them?

1. First, *As you may hinder these influences by omitting your attendance upon hearing the word: so you may by your conscientious attendance upon it, do something in order to the obtaining of it.* I observe that the blind men in the Gospel, observed, and placed themselves in *Christs walks*, the way wherein he was to go. He that conscientiously waiteth upon the preaching of the Word, placeth himself in the way wherein Christ useth to go. He that walks to the Ale-house, or to his worldly business, or abideth in his House, when he should walk to a Sermon, is out of *Christs walk*, and as this is in his own power to avoid, so by not avoiding, he hindereth divine drawings. The Preaching of the Word is the ordinance of God for the Salvation of the Elect, when Christ was lifted up, he by this drew all those Gentiles that were converted to the faith of Christ; you know in the drawing of a thing by a Cord, there is necessary, a *Cord to draw with*, which must be fastned to the thing we would draw, when it is fastned, he that draweth must put to his strength, it is not the

Cord

Cord that draweth, but the power and ſtrength of the mans arm that uſeth the Cord. That which is drawn here is the *Soul of man*, a poor dead Soul, that hath in it no principle of Spiritual life, and of itſelf cannot come to Chriſt. He that draweth is God, the holy Spirit of God, and that by the power of an everlaſting arm; but now the Cord is the word of God (ſo God hath ordained) either ſome terrible word of threatning, or ſome comfortable word of promiſe, ſome word of God, is by the holy Spirit faſtned upon the Soul, by this the Soul is drawn, yet not by the force of the Word, but by the power of the Spirit making uſe of the Word; now he who neglects the reading, or hearing of the word, hinders his own drawing, he rejecteth and refuſeth the Cord, which though alone, it would not draw the Soul, yet is the mean, the *Cord* in the hand of the Spirit, by which ordinarily Souls are drawn that do come to Chriſt. On the other ſide thoſe Souls that are diligent, and careful to read and hear the Word of God, where it is interpreted, and applied with moſt tendency to the converſion of Souls, though he doth nothing ultimately, and efficiently, yet he doth much, in a way of means in order to his drawing unto Chriſt. This is the firſt way.

2. As a man may hinder the *drawings of God, by quenching the motions of the holy Spirit, and giving a deaf ear to the knocks of it*, or *delaying its obedience to them, ſuffering vain company, or worldly cares to choke the motions of the Spirit, and wear out the impreſſions of the word*: ſo he may *further them* by *favouring* them, *retaining ſuch impreſſions*, and *whetting the word upon his heart*. There is ſcarce any perſon who is a conſtant attender upon the Preaching of the word, but at ſome time or other will find ſome diſcourſe more than ordinarily affecting him, and making ſome more than ordinary impreſſions upon him, now if when a man findeth this, he endeavoureth to ſtifle this conviction, or wear off this impreſſion, and to work his Soul out of the trouble of it, he hereby oppoſeth and reſiſteth the drawings of Divine Grace. But on the other ſide, if he withdraws himſelf, ſits alone, meditateth upon what he hath heard, ſearcheth the Scriptures to ſee if it be according to what is revealed there, and when worldly buſineſs would put it out of his thoughts, if he endeavours again to bring is to his remembrance, and fetcheth it again into his thoughts, deſiring it may have its perfect work. This man now doth what in him lieth to promove divine drawings.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, As a man or woman may hinder God's drawings, *by walking contrary to his or her Light*: So they may *promove them, by walking up to their Light and Power.* The Soul that is drawn to Christ is alive, and yet dead: *Alive* as a *natural* rational Soul, dead as to *God* and *Goodness*. And this answereth an *obvious* and ordinary Objection, *viz. What can a dead Soul do?* The Answer is easie, it *can do nothing* so far as it is dead; but though the natural man be *spiritually dead*, yet considered as a man, a rational creature, he is alive; and though he can do nothing that is *spiritually good*, because he is *dead in sin*; yet he may do something that is *morally, and rationally good*, because he is *rationally alive*, and under the power and conduct of reason in a great measure. He hath some *Natural Light*; he hath a further *revealed Light* by and in the Gospel; and though he hath not a power to live up to all *the Light* which the Gospel shews him; yet he hath a power to sin against that Light, to which he might walk up, and of which he might make a better improvement. It is very possible, and too too ordinary for men when God draws one way, to suffer their passions, their vile affections and lusts, to draw another; and in doing it, to triumph over their reason. This is highly provocative of God. There is a great question about the power and freedom of man's will by nature. Sober Divines say, the *unregenerate man* hath no power, no *freedom* to what is *truly, and spiritually good.* If any power, or freedom may be allowed to the unrenewed will, certainly it is most proper to assert it at such a time, when the Holy Spirit moveth most strongly, by its *impulses* and *convictions.* The unregenerate man at such a time more than another hath in his power to resist his lusts and motions to sin, and give up himself to God; if he will now resist this Light, and not to his power use this help, he thereby hindereth God's drawings. Suppose a man in a Pit, and weak, and not able to get out; some strength he hath while he lies still, to hold back, but none to raise himself upward, to get out: When a Cord is fastened about him, if instead of yielding himself, he holds back what he can; this man now hinders the charitable drawing that others more strong would lend him.

Fourthly and lastly, *Pray to God that he would draw you out of the horrible Pit, and miry Clay.* It is the Holy Spirit that draweth; and Christ tells us, that *he giveth the Holy Spirit to those that ask him.* But I shall turn my discourse to the Children of God, and shew them what is their duty, upon the consideration of this truth; That no Soul,

Soul, unless drawn by God, either comes to, or runneth after Christ. I shall open it in several particulars.

First, This Doctrine calleth to all who apprehend themselves to be *come to Christ, to examine their Calling*, whether it be such as amounts to a *Divine Drawing*; whether there be any thing wrought in your Souls, which *flesh and blood* could not reveal to you; any thing more than could be the effect of the *will of the flesh*, or *the will of man*. I have before enlarged upon this Theme, shewing you, how you may know whether your Faith be *a Faith of the operation of God*. The work of God upon your Souls with power. Whether what you take to be Holiness, be the Sanctification of the Spirit. You have heard that there is an *Assent to the Gospel*, which may be given upon meer humane testimony, or upon *probable Arguments of Reason*; neither of which is true Faith; that there may be a *Moral Righteousness*, and a formal course of performing Religious Duties; neither of which amount to the *Sanctification of the Spirit*, or *a running after Christ* upon his *drawings*. I shall here only add, that there are two or three things which may draw men to some *Reformation of life*, though Christ draweth not.

1. *The interests of mens bodily lives, and healths, and estates.* Temperance, Sobriety, Chastity, are Virtues, in the practice of which men are concerned, as to these; and though indeed lusts have so far fermented in some debaucht persons, that these interests will not draw them to such a Reformation, yet in many who have not been tainted by a vitious Education, and in whom custom hath not begot a second nature, these concerns will draw much, as to which actions *Grace* comes not in, (I mean special Grace) further than to direct men to do them from a Principle of *Faith*, *Love*, and *Obedience to the Will of God*, and with *an aim at glorifying God*.

2. The *Examples of others, especially such as are our Superiours, whom we honour or reverence, or our near friends and companions whom we love, may have a great force upon us, that we may please them, or be like unto them, to do many things.* It is of great concern with whom we converse. Many persons in Religion, write only by Copies, and do acts because they see others do them whom they love, admire, or have in reverence. These Examples alone will not only bring men to a conformity to them, in a civil conversation, but also to forms of Religion and Worship.

3. The *interest of mens credit and applause in the World will go a great way.* *Saul* begs of *Samuel* to honour him before the People.

The Pharisees sought the *praise of men*, rather than *that of God*; and indeed this is the general cause of Hypocrisie. This happens more generally when Religion is in fashion and credit with the world. I might instance in several other things, but these are sufficient. Try therefore and examine your Souls, and rest not till you find what may evidence to you, that you are indeed *drawn by Christ*.

Secondly, *This Doctrine calls to all the People of God for Humility*; indeed it evidenceth *Humility* a necessary ingredient into Saintship. A proud Child of God is a contradiction. *Grace* leaves the Soul nothing to boast in, nothing to be proud of. Is he come to Christ? He had never come, if the Father had not drawn him: Doth he *run* after him faster than another? he had never run, if he had not been drawn. There were some in the Church of *Corinth*, who were puffed up, who despised *Paul*, and thought of themselves above what they ought to think; *they were full, they were rich, they had need of nothing*. Observe the Argument by which the Apostle humbleth them, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *Who hath made thee to differ from another*? Or, *what hast thou which thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it*? Art thou *come to Christ*? and is not thy neighbour? What follows from hence, but (as the Apostle to the *Romans* saith) that to thee God hath been more good, to him more severe. Hast thou come of thy self, or in thy own strength? Christ hath told us; *That no man cometh to the Son, but he whom the Father draweth. Every one as he is learned and taught of the Father, cometh unto the Son.* He who is not drawn, is the object of thy pity, and deserveth thy prayers, thy good counsel and exhortations, all the help thou canst give him; but thou hast no reason to triumph, or boast, or glory over him; had not the Lord drawn thee, thou hadst been in the same circumstances that he, as as much a stranger to Christ as he is. It is grace, special grace which alone maketh the difference betwixt thee and him. Dost thou find thy self more strong and able than another to resist a motion to sin, whether from the lusts of thy own heart, or from the suggestions of of the Devil, or from the World? Thou standest when another is overcome and falleth. Dost thou find more ability to spiritual duties, more freedom and liveliness in the performance of them? still all this is from grace: Without Christ thou couldest do nothing; thou hast no reason to glory, because what thou hast is received; what thou dost is by grace, which thou hast received. *I live* (saith *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20.) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I*

now

ow live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God. So as the Child of God hath nothing to glory in, nothing to boast and triumph over his weaker Brother; for, if he differs, it is grace alone makes him to differ.

Thirdly, This notion calleth upon the People of God *to bless the Lord, if at any time they find their hearts more inabled to run after God,* Psal. 18. 29. *By thee* (saith *David*) *I have run, or I have broken through a Troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.* *David* owns there to God his Victory over his fleshly enemies; but a Christian's Warfare is more spiritual, against *Principalities and Powers,* against spiritual Enemies, mighty Temptations, strong Motions to sin; doth he at any time get a Victory against them? certainly he is obliged to give God the glory, for it is by him that he breaketh through the Troops of the Prince of darkness. Hath he difficult duties to perform, and hath he found a strength to perform them, still the glory is due unto God; for by him he *leapeth over the wall.* It is an expression of *David's, Psal.* 87. 7. *All my springs are in thee.* Our spiritual life is maintained from many springs. A spring of *pardoning grace,* because of our renewing guilt. A spring of renewing and sanctifying grace, because of the frequent *lustings of the flesh against the Spirit,* and our being brought so often *into a captivity to the Law of our members.* Springs of *strengthening, quickening, comforting grace,* because of accidents which weaken our strength, make us dull and heavy in the service of God, and often *to walk in the dark, and see no light.* Now all our fresh springs are in Christ; whither then but to God should we go with our homage, for any influence of grace received? God laid it to the charge of the *Israelites, Hos.* 2. 8. that *they did not know that he gave them their Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and Silver, and Gold.* Great evils followed this ignorance. 1. *God had not that glory which was due unto him for it.* 2 They made *an ill use of them,* they *multiplied them for* Baal. 3. They *by this means provoked God to deprive them of those mercies.* Those who do not know, that is, do not believe that their fresh springs of grace are from God, cannot give God the glory of them, nor will think themselves so concerned, to use them for the honour and glory of God; the not doing of which will provoke God to deprive them of them. I cannot understand, how those who derive all their good motions from their own wills, should understand themselves obliged further than to sacrifice to their own Net and Yarn, and to applaud themselves instead of giving glory to

God. What have they to praise God for, saving only for making them reasonable creatures, and so leaving them to the power and freedom of their own natural faculties?

Fourthly and lastly, This notion calleth upon all the Children of God to *eye* and to *use Christ, as the fountain both of their spiritual life and strength.* Christ is the *All* in *all* to, and in all his Saints. He is the *Lord their Righteousness*, that is, their *All* as to *Justification*: The *Lord their strength*, that is, as to *Sanctification*, and in Heaven he will also be to them *All* in *All.* They shall be *ever with the Lord:* that's their *All in Heaven.* But here is our infirmity, that we do not *eye Christ* in this notion. Hence our *doubts*, and *fears*, because of our guilt of sin, and imperfection in duty; hence our despondencies as to the Promises, if our Souls be but a little spiritually sick, we prophesie to our selves no less than spiritual death. We shall one day die by the hand of our tempter, or by the power of our lusts. Here we do not act like our Father *Abraham*; he did not consider the deadness of his own body, nor the deadness of *Sarah*'s womb; he staggered not at the Promise through unbelief. We consider only the frame and temper of our own hearts, and what they are able to produce; we consider not what God is able to perform, nor yet his Promise, which ensureth his willingness, that he might be faithful. *Fear not* (said God to his People) *for I am with thee; be not dismaid, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, and uphold thee with the hand of my Righteousness*, Isa. 41. 10. & v. 14. *Fear not thou worm* Jacob, *and you men of* Israel, *for I am thy Redeemer.*

2. *Use him as the fountain both of your life and strength.* It is with the *spiritual life* of the Soul, as with the *natural life* of the Body; both of them are from *God's breathings*: The first is from the *breathings of his more common providence*; the second from the *breathings of his more special grace*, and *spiritual influence*: And in the like manner, as the former is also preserved, and maintained by God upholding our faculties, and the virtues in our meat to nourish, in our physick to heal us, and keeping off those accidents, which would ruine and destroy us; use him therefore as the principle and fountain of your life:

1. *By frequent addresses and applications to him:* Because our *natural life is from God*: We are not excused from endeavouring to our utmost the preservation of it, whether by the use of *food* or *physick*, or cautious avoiding what will be noxious and pernicious to it, because the influence of God's blessing is not to be expected in the

omission

omission and neglect of due means, but from the due use of them, God concurreth with our endeavours, and use of means, though he putteth forth an influence in order to the effect, beyond the bare vertue of the means: so as to our spiritual life, the necessity of Christs influence in order to the preserving, and upholding it, doth not infer a needlesness of our use of such means as he hath instituted, in order to that end, it only teacheth us not to trust in the means alone, but to look beyond them unto Christ. Every gracious Soul hath in itself a principle of spiritual life, as every living Body hath in it a principle of natural life, but as the Soul in the Body of a man may be obstructed in its operations, so the Soul may be clog'd in its spiritual operations, hindered by lusts, and corruptions, hindered by strong temptations and motions to sin; these may make the Soul stumble and fall, they may make it dull, heavy and inactive, weak, and sad, and dejected; here is need of Christs *further drawings*, in order to it we must cry unto him, we must lie in the way in which he useth to meet Souls with such dispensations.

2. *Keep up in your Souls a dependency upon Christ, without distrust and unbelief*; when you cannot live upon the sense of strengthening, quickning, consolatory influences, yet *live upon faith*, as to them; God is never so much honoured as when he is trusted, when his Servants live a dependent life upon him, for whatsoever he hath promised. It speaketh a great faith to live upon a promise, when we cannot live by sight; a Christian should live by faith upon Christ as to his spiritual influences, with reference to the Enemies of his Soul, as *David* lived by Faith upon God, and his promises, and providence with reference to his worldly Enemies, *Psal.* 118. 10, 11, 12. *All Nations* (saith he) *compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them: They compassed me about, yea they compassed me about, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about like Bees, they are quenched as the fire of Thorns, for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.* If our strength depends upon Christs drawings, we have no reason to distrust because of our own weakness, and have nothing to do but to do what in us lieth, depending upon Christ for his further supplies and influence.

Sermon XXII.

Canticles 1. 4.

Draw me, and We will run after thee.

I Have done with the Spouse's Petition, *Draw me.* I now come to the Argument, or her Promise, *And we will run after thee.* She begg'd her Beloved's *drawing*; she promiseth her own *running.* From the Petition I observed; That the Soul must be first *drawn, before it will come to, or run after Christ.* This I have discoursed largely. I come now to the second *Proposition* I raised from these words:

Prop. *That the gracious Soul being first drawn, will run after Christ.*

Till it be *drawn*, it will not, it cannot run; when once drawn, it will run. This *Proposition* I shall open, prove, and apply. In the Explication I have only the term *running* to open. I opened the term *draw* largely in my Discourse upon the former *Proposition*, where I told you it signified, *a powerful gracious influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Soul, persuading, alluring, and commanding the Soul's Obedience.* It is an act both *sweet*, and *powerful. Sweet*, for God draws *with the Cords of Love*, as he speaks, *Jer.* 31. 3. yet *powerful*, for the Soul is *made willing*; the will is not *forced*, but melted, renewed, and changed, and contrariwise inclined to what was before its inclination. So as my meaning is, that when God hath once, by the sweet and powerful influence of his Spirit upon the Soul of a man, *allured, persuaded, and commanded the Soul* to its duty, then it will *run after him.* The only question to be spoken to is, what is meant by *Running.* When I opened the Text, I told you of several things imported by this term, I shall now more largely discourse them

1. *Running* implieth *willingness* to the *motion.* It implieth *motion*, and so is opposed to *lying*, or *sitting* still. It is a saying of *Augustine*,

Augustine, Certum est nos velle, quum volumus, agere quum agimur. It is (saith he) certain, that we *will*, when we are *made willing*, that *we act*, when we *are acted, sed ille facit ut velimus*, it is God that maketh us to be willing. He giveth *to will and to do*. Men may run, that are not originally willing, it is a mischief that they fear, which makes them run, but yet even then they move *willingly*, though it be a danger imminent upon them, which maketh them so willing. But this motion is a much sweeter motion, they are *made willing* first, and then they move out of choice, willingly: until the Soul be renewed, and changed, it moveth not at all toward God, it may move to natural actions, from that principle of *natural life*, of which it is possessed. It may move to moral actions, from that principle of life which every *reasonable Soul* is possessed of. But it moveth not to any truly spiritual actions, because it wanteth a principle of *Spiritual life*. But this being infused in regeneration, *to will being given unto it*, it moveth in the ways of God, and that from a principle within itself. *You* (saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 2. 1.) *hath he quickned, who were dead in trespasses and sins*. It moveth not, as a meer *Machine*, or *Instrument*, from the *power* and *force* of a forreign agent, but as a *living creature*, from itself, and a principle within itself. Yet not without a *divine influence*, look as it is in natural motions, though they flow from a *a principle of life in a man*, yet they are not without an *influence* of more *ordinary common providence*, upholding our natural faculties; hence the Apostle saith of God, *in him we live, move and have our being*: So it is as to our Spiritual motions, the Soul moveth from the principles of Spiritual life infused into it, from the principles of the new creature, but yet not without the *influence of the Spirit of Grace upon it*, upholding those habits of Grace, which are infused into the Soul, and exciting it to, and assisting of it in Spiritual actions. *Without me* (saith Christ) *you can do nothing*. he doth not say, without me you cannot do much, or you cannot do great things, but you can do nothing. But yet to *will* is present with the Soul, yea and to do, though it hath no strength to do what it would. And as the Soul hath need of a daily influence of Grace, in its ordinary course of *Spiritual action*, so it hath need of more special and powerful influences, when it meets with a *work more difficult*, for (saith the Apostle) 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *We are not sufficient to think one good thought*

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as of our selves, for now our sufficiency is from God. This is now *Gratia co-operans*, co-operating Grace, in the exercises of which we are not *meerly passive*, as in the *reception* of the first Grace; as it was with the *Israelites* in their journey towards *Canaan*, *Numb.* 9. 17. 18. *&c.* They kept pace with the *Cloud*, and with the *Pillar of fire*, when the *Cloud moved, they moved, when the Cloud stood still, they stood still. At the Commandment of the Lord they journied, and at the Commandment of the Lord they pitched, as long as the Cloud abode upon the Tabernacle, they rested in their Tents. And when the Cloud tarried long, upon the Tabernacle many days, then they --- journied not.* So it is with such as are Israelites indeed, in their spiritual motions toward the *new Hierusalem*, the City of God. If the Grace of God assists not, they move not, and according to the degree of its influence, they move more, or less. But yet they move, and willingly move, though not without the co-operating and assisting Grace of God.

2. Secondly, *Running* implyeth *strength in the motion*, thus it is opposed to *creeping*, or *walking faintly*. The weak man may creep, and go slowly, but he cannot run. When the Lord draweth, the Soul will not only move towards God, and that *freely* and *willingly*, but it will move *strongly*; it will find strength against sin, and strength unto duties, *Job.* 17. 9. *The righteous man will hold on in his way, and he that is of clean hands shall grow stronger, and stronger.* God commandeth that we should *love him with all our strength*, Luk. 10. 27. When the Lord draweth the Soul, then it runneth with all its strength, loveth God with a love that is *stronger than the Grave*; then it believeth with a *strong faith*, and obeyeth with a *perfect heart*. While God was present with *Sampson*, though they tied his Hair to a Beam, and shut up the Gates of the City, he could carry away *Beam* and *Gates*, though he had no more then the jaw-bone of an Ass, he could with it slay a thousand men, when God was departed from him, he could not get out of his Enemies hands, though he had no such opposition; when a Soul finds the power and presence of Divine Grace, though it hath strong corruptions, and meet with strong Temptations, yet they are all nothing to it, it easily over all becomes *more than Conqueror*. *Peter* at one time, at the command of Christ, walks to him upon the Sea, at another time wanting the same special assistance, is overcome by a silly Maid in the High Priests Hall; the opposite Temptation was much

much the same in both cases, *viz.* from the *fear of his life*, which was in as apparent danger from the *Sea*, as from the Enemies in the Hall of the High Priest.

3. Running argues *speed*, so it is opposed to *walking* a foot-pace, or step by step. When the Soul is by God drawn unto him, and wants not his co-operating Grace drawing him after him, it will not only move towards God, and that with strength, and courage, but it will move with *nimbleness* and *readiness*. As it is with the body sometimes, though it hath its usual strength, and be able to work as usually, yet it is seized with a torpor, and lazyness, there is a dulness, and inactivity upon it: So it is with the Soul, its Spiritual distemper many times, is not so much a weakness, as a spiritual deadness, dulness, and inactivity, so as it wants a promptness, and readiness to its duty: It cannot say with *David*, *My heart is ready O God, my heart is ready, I will pray and sing Praise*. *Running* argues the absence of this ill temper. If the Lord draweth the Soul, it will not only serve him, but it will serve him with a ready mind, and free Spirit; praise and duty will wait for God in the Soul; it will not only walk, but *run the ways of Gods Commandments*. *David* hath an expression to this purpose, *Psal.* 119. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments*. Every Soul that loves God keepeth the Commandments of God, it is the test of our love to God. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them* (saith Christ, *John* 14 21.) *he it is that loveth me*. But there is a great deal of difference in mens keeping, and fulfilling the commandments of God. The meanest, weakest *Christian* doth in his measure keep the Lords commandments, all the commandments of God, *Psal.* 119. 6. *Then* (saith *David*) *shall I not be ashamed, when I have a respect to all thy Commandments*. He that hath the least of saving Grace, sets the law of the Lord in his Eye, and makes the word of God a *light to his feet*, and a *Lanthorn to his paths*, and hath a reverence and regard to all the commandments of God, and *To will is present with him*, he would walk perfectly with God, but in many things he doth offend, through weakness, and in many things through a dulness, and heaviness which sometimes doth affect, and afflict his Soul, he doth not only want a *strength* to perform, but he wants a life, and quickness of Spirit in what he doth, but now if the Lord draweth, the Soul *makes haste and delayeth not*

to keep the Commandments of God. Jacob himself had forgot the vow which he had made unto God, when he fled from the face of his *Brother Esau*; God *draweth him*, saith unto him, Gen. 35. 1. *Arise go up to Bethel, make there an Altar to God*, &c. then Jacob made haste, and *delayed not*, v. 2. When there is a suspension of this *drawing Grace* in its co-operating, and *concurring influences*, the Soul moves heavily, like *Pharaohs* Chariots; when the Wheels are taken off, it hath a view of its duty, and lieth under convictions as to it, and it may be finds strength enough to the performance of it, but wants a readiness of mind, and is ready when it hath a monition to duty from such as wish well to it, to say as he said to Paul, *Go thy way, when I am at leisure I will send for thee.* Or *to morrow*, or *at such or such a time I will do it*; as the young man in the Gospel whom Christ bid *follow him*, said, *Suffer me first to go and bury my dead*; So sometimes the Soul is ready to say, suffer me first to go, and do such or such a thing. So the Soul is ready to delay and put off good motions, but when the *Lord draweth*, then it *maketh haste and delayeth not to keep his Commandments.* It longeth for times of duty. It is glad when they say unto it, *Come, let us go up to the House of the Lord*, it sayeth, when shall *I come and appear before God*? There is a time when the Soul saith, *when will the Sabbath come, the hour of Prayer come, that I may appear before God, and pour out my Soul before him?* This is now when God draweth hard, when the Spirit of God cometh upon the Soul, in a more than ordinary influence: and there is a time when the Soul saith, *when will the Sabbath be gone, the hour of duty be run out?* This is when the Lord doth not *draw* in such a manner. The believing Soul like the flowers, *opens* or *shuts*, as the Sun of righteousness shineth more or less upon it. Let me again allude to that Text, *Psal.* 65. 1. *Praise waiteth for God in Zion.* Praise is a rent due from our Souls to God, we farm much mercy from the great Landlord of all good, *Praise* is all the rent we pay. Now look as it is in the world, a bad tenant never hath his rent ready, so it is with a bad Man, he lives upon mercy, and it may be hath liberal portions of mercy, but God never hears of him to pay his acknowledgments. A good Tenant, if the times be good, hath alwaies his rent ready for his Landlord, so as his rent *waiteth* for his Landlord: but if the times be bad, even the best Tenants, though they have an heart to pay their rent, yet may not have it to

pay,

pay, their Landlords may wait for their rents; so it is with the best Souls. If the Sun of righteousness shines out clearly upon them, and the Spirit of Grace draweth powerfully, Praise waiteth for God in their Souls. If not, God may *wait* for his *Praises*. Hence *David* so often prayeth. *Quicken me according to thy word*, Psal. 119. 25. *Quicken me in thy way*, v. 37. *Quicken me in thy righteousness*, v. 40.

I have now opened the term *Run*. The Proposition opened lies thus before you, *That the Soul of a Christian, once drawn not only by the motives and arguments of the Gospel improved by the gifts of Gods Minister, but by the secret, and powerful influence of the Spirit of God upon it, doth no longer lie still (as the Soul dead in sin) nor move from a forreign power put forth upon it, but from an inward principle within itself, and that not weakly and impotently, but with might and strength, and that not dully, and heavily, but with life, freedom, speed, and chearfulness, after God in the way of its duty, keeping the Commandments of God with its whole heart*; being first made willing it willeth, being first *set on work*, it *worketh*, yet not of itself meerly nor principally. *I live* (saith the Apostle) *yet not I*, but *Christ liveth in me*, and the *life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God. I can do all things* (saith the same Apostle to the *Philippians*) *through Christ that strengtheneth me, and without me you can do nothing*, saith Christ to his Disciples, *Joh.* 14. 3.

The truth of this further appears from Gods Peoples promises of running upon Gods drawing, in that excellent 119 *Psal.* you shall find many passages of this tendency. v. 32. *I will run the ways of thy Commandments, when thou shalt inlarge my heart.* 33 *Teach me O Lord the way of thy Statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end.* v. 34. *Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law, yea I shall observe it with my whole heart*, v. 35. *Make me to go in the paths of thy Commandments.* v. 36. *Incline my heart to thy testimonies. The inlarging of the heart*, his prayer for giving *him understanding, making him to go in the paths of Gods Commandments*, &c. are but all several phrases, expressive of the drawing influences of *Divine Grace*, which are followed with the promises of *running, keeping Gods Commandments*, yea, *keeping them with his whole heart, keeping them to the end.* So v. 7. *I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.* So v. 41. *Let thy mercies come unto me, even thy salvation*, v. 44. *So shall I keep thy law continually.*

What needs any further proof of this than what every good Christian hath from its own experience? Who is there that walks with God, that alwaies finds the same spiritual temper? that doth not find, that he cannot at sometimes do as he can, and doth do at other times? Every good Christian finds the same *willing* at all times. To will is alwaies present with him; but who finds the same degree of strength, the same readiness, and chearfulness of Spirit in Gods service at all times? Now from whence is this, if not from the inequal drawings of Divine Grace? if the Soul be drawn strongly, then is it strong, if weakly, it moveth accordingly. Being drawn, then it runs. Being at first drawn to Christ, it moves, being *further drawn*, it runs.

The reason of this lieth. 1. Partly in the Souls *renewed nature*. 2. *Partly in the nature of special Divine Grace*.

1. *All motion is from a principle of life*. Natural motion from a Natural life, Spiritual motion from the Spiritual life, and the truly Spiritual motion is as much an indication of a *Spiritual life* that principleth it, as the *Natural motion* is an indication of that Natural life from which it floweth, and the Spiritual motion is as much the necessary effect of a principle of Spiritual life, as the Natural motion is the necessary effect of a Natural life. So as the Soul being once quickned by the quickning Spirit, cannot but move in its Spiritual motions. But look as it is in the natural motions, some motion must attend all natural life, yet it is more or less, more or less strong, or weak, and there is a more or less chearfulness, and readiness, attends the motion of the natural body, as the faculties of the Soul that animates it, are more or less upheld by the influence of Divine Providence, and the incumbrances of that life are more kept off by the power of Divine Providence: So it is as to our Spiritual life, there is in that Soul that is once drawn to Christ, and so alive to God, a *seed of God abiding*, which is a constant principle of life, and is alwaies working, and moving to, and in its proper operations, but yet these motions are more or less strong, free, and chearful, according to the influence of the holy Spirit of God, and the workings of it in the Soul, which being a free agent, sometimes puts it self forth more, sometimes *less*, & according to that are the Souls motions either more quick and chearful, or more dull and heavy, but being once drawn to Christ, it *moves*, and moves willingly from a principle within it self, being made willing. it willeth, and

and chuseth the things that please God, though it must be further drawn before it *runneth*. It requires no more than a renewed sanctified heart to move for and towards God, but it requireth an *inlarged heart*, to run after God.

2. Secondly, It will yet further appear from the *Nature of Divine Grace*, in its *special saving operations*. There are those who will acknowledge no Grace but *exciting Grace* in the proposal of the Gospel, and pressing the Grace of it by those gifts which God hath for that end given to his Ministers, whatsoever else is done in the Soul, they will have to flow *from the power of mans will, left free to good or evil*; but we say this is not enough, there must also be a *working Grace*, applied to the Soul in *conversion*, and a *co-working Grace*, which is necessary to the Soul after conversion. Now all *special Grace*, whether it be *operans*, or *co-operans*, that which we call working, or that which we call *co-working*, is effective; those who will own nothing but an *exciting Grace*, allow it no proper effect upon the Soul, for if it be productive of an effect, it is more than *exciting*. Now here indeed lies the difference betwixt *common* and *special Grace*, betwixt the Grace that *bringeth salvation*, and that which only *propoſeth and offereth Salvation*. The first is alway *effective of its end*, the latter is *never effective*, but is determined in the exhibition and offer of good, which man is left to his own freedom, and choice whether he will accept yea or no, which being admitted, it is not possible but that the Soul once drawn by it, must run, or rather will run, for now it moves from the inward principle of a renewed nature, and if *working special Grace* be effective, and faileth not in its *operations* upon the unrenewed Soul, it is much more effective of its end in the Soul that is changed, and renewed where it is but *assistant* to the *renewed nature*, so as the Soul being drawn, *will run*, First, From that principle of spiritual life which is in the *renewed nature* alwaies a principle of some motion, though sometimes more, and sometimes less; and Secondly, From the *powerful assistance* of that *special Grace* which God puts forth upon the Soul in its *renewed state*, helping it over those mountains of difficulties which sometimes it meets with, and removing those stumbling blocks, which *corruption*, and the *malignity* of the *world*, or its *grand adversary*, oft-times layeth in its way. I have thus far opened the proposition, I shall now apply it. First,

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Use 1. 1. By way of *Caution. Blindness* is a great Mother of boldness and confidence, and *Love* is the Mother of jealousy and suspicion, hence it is, that the natural man knowing nothing of spiritual things, nor understanding the state of the Soul by nature, nor the workings of God in the Soul, turning it from sin unto God, seldom or never examineth, or questioneth his state. The knowing Christian fullest of *Love*, for God, finds difficulty to satisfy himself as to his *Spiritual state*. The first concludeth himself sufficiently drawn, because he sits under the preaching of the Gospel, and finds sometimes some good motions, and impressions, whether he obeyeth them or no, whether he be turned into the likeness of the Gospel, yea or no. The other, though he doth find his heart *renewed*, and *changed*, tho he doth find, that *to will is present with him*, yet because he wanteth *strength to perform*, because he doth not find at all times, that promptness, and readiness of mind, that freedom, activity and chearfulness of Spirit, which he thinks he hath sometimes found, and which he seeth others triumph, and rejoice in, questioneth whether he was drawn, yea or no. Now such a Soul ought to distinguish,

1. Betwixt a *being drawn to Christ*, and a *being drawn after Christ*. It is true, there is no Soul that is drawn to Christ, but *shall be drawn after him*, but yet these are two things, both the acts of special, powerful Grace, but yet in a different kind, and degree.

2. Secondly. *Betwixt a real drawing after him*, and a *gradual drawing*. I told you before that all Divine *drawing* signifieth a *sweet, and powerful influence of the Spirit upon the Soul, by which it is allured, changed, and melted into that duty which the Soul oweth to God in obedience to the Gospel*; now as it is in our *drawing* of a thing, or person to us, we may put forth more or less power as we please: So in the *divine drawings*, though *divine drawing* be a mercy of that nature, that it shall and will follow the Soul all the days of its life, God will never *depart from the Soul* to which he is thus united, to do it good, and *he will put his fear into its heart, that it shall never depart from him*; yet he puts forth more or less of his power, according to the good pleasure of his own will, and the conduct of his own infinite wisdom, and according also to our behaviour toward him; let me for the relief of such a Soul lay down three conclusions.

1. First, I say *there is no Soul by the Father drawn to Christ, but that*

that Soul is also, and shall be by the Spirit drawn after him. Upon the Souls being drawn to Christ, there followeth an *Union* between Christ and the Spirit of Christ, and the Soul that is so drawn. Christ after that time is in the Soul, and the Soul is in Christ, hence his *Spirit is put into their hearts, and dwelleth in them*, a multitude of phrases of that nature are to be found in holy writ. It is called an *ingrafeing into Christ*. Now it is not possible, that the Soul should be ingrafted into such a stock, but it must partake of the fatness of the stock, and grow up in him, the *seed of God* abiding in the Soul, it cannot but grow and spring up in it. Some Communion with Christ alwaies follows this union. So that unless the union with Christ could be wholly broken and dissolved, its communion with Christ, cannot be wholly interrupted, interrupted it may be, but I say not wholly interrupted. Secondly,

2. The least influence of *special Grace keeps the Soul moving for, and towards God, and in a willingness to serve and obey him, and preserveth it from a total falling away.* *Papists* say, that we may fall away both *totally*, and *finally*, *Lutherans* say we may fall away *totally*, but not *finally*, but we say, *the justified Soul can neither fall away totally, nor yet finally*, if he could fall away *totally*, the union betwixt Christ and the Soul, must be dissolved, or the *union* remaining, the communion consequent to that union might be wholly interrupted, neither of which can be.

3. But Thirdly, The holy Spirit dwelling in the Souls of Believers, and working in them *putteth forth its power, sometimes more, sometimes less*, as a free agent, and according to the good pleasure of his own will, *as is the drawing, so is the running.* Hence the Soul moveth, sometimes with more, sometimes with lesser strength, sometimes with more promptness, and readiness, sometimes with less, as the holy Spirit is pleased more or less to exert and put forth his power, in, and upon the Soul. Now from this discourse it appeareth, that a Soul that findeth that God hath renewed, and changed it so far, that to will is present with it, and it hath an heart to do, though it wanteth such a strength, such a freedom to, and chearfulness in duty, as others rejoice in, and itself hath sometimes found, yet hath no reason to conclude, that it was never truly drawn to Christ, because as it apprehendeth it is not *drawn after him*, all the evidence of which that it hath, is because it doth not run as at other times; all this

may be, yet the Soul may be truly drawn to him, and also *drawn after him*, though not so *powerfully* as it may be it hath felt itself, at other times, or seen others drawn.

Use 2. In the second place, This notion may inform us. *That a running after Christ is the duty of a Christian.* The life of a Child of God is in Scripture, ordinarily expressed under the notion of a *walking with God*, a phrase that some in this age would scoff at, but one of the ancientest by which in Scripture a course of holiness is expressed, *Gen.* 5. 24. *Enoch walked with God, and was not*; but now if *walking* be taken in opposition to *running*, there is something more than *walking* with God, the duty of a believer; even this *running* after Christ which I have been describing to you. Hence it is also expressed under this notion. So the Spouse here expresseth it, *we will run after thee.* So David, *I will run the ways of thy Commandments.* So St. *Paul, so run that you may obtain*, we are not only under an obligation to serve God, but to serve him with all our might, all our strength, to serve him with *readiness*, and *freedom of Spirit*; this is that which elsewhere is called a *growing in* Grace, and corresponds with the *Israelites* motion and pace to *Hierusalem*, mentioned, Psal. 84. *a going from strength to strength.* It is a long journey that we have to go, from the *minimum quod sic*, the least degree of Grace, to the *maximum quod sic*, the *fulness of stature which is in Jesus Christ*, and therefore we had need run; sinners run in their sinful courses. Lusts get strength, and discover their activity daily, men make haste to be compleat in sinning, to fill up the measure of their iniquities. Men make haste to be *rich in the world*, and shall the Children of God make no haste to be rich in Grace? *David* saith, *My Soul followeth hard after thee*, Psal. 63. 8, St. *Paul* tells us that *he pressed forward toward the Mark*, Phil. 3. 14. Ah! where are those Souls of whom we can say they *run* after Christ. How few are those Souls that *follow hard after God*, that go as fast as they can, though it may be they cannot go as fast as they would.

1. *How many are there in the world that appear to us as if they were moving after God, but move meerly as Machines and Ingines*, they are rather *moved* from some forreign principle without them, than move from any intrinsick principle; all hypocrites, all formal professors do so, they follow Christ for the Loaves, or are drawn from the consideration of their own credit and reputation, some are drawn to some degrees of duty, from the re-

reflections of their natural conscience; this is now no running after God, they may do many things which God requires, but it is from no internal principle.

2. *How many are there that instead of running, halt?* We dare not say that they do not *move* at all, we hope their hearts are right, we hope they are the Children of *Jonathan*, but they are lame of their feet, with one foot they seem to go right, with another they fail, they are like *Naaman* the Syrian, who pretended that he would serve God, even the God of *Israel*, only he desires that the Lord would be merciful to him, as to *his bowing down in the House of Rimmon.* They are neither *uniform* nor *steady*, and *constant* in their service of God, they seem to run in publick duties, but follow them into their Families and Closets, there they halt. They appear like those that run in duties of more external communion with God, but halt in duties of more secret, heart communion with God. Nor are they *constant*; that of the Apostle to the *Galatians* is applicable to them, *Gal.* 5. 7. *You did run well, who hindered you?* Heretofore one would have thought them in a great zeal for God, but they are grown cold, and remiss and are very careless of their conversations, these never truly ran, though they appeared to others to have ran: at least they never ran so as to obtain. It is said, *Isaiah* 40. 12. *That they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like the Eagle, they shall run, and not be weary, walk and not faint.*

3. *How many more are there that seem to stand at a stay?* We cannot say they halt, that they are not uniform, or not constant, they are not to be accused of any notorious lapses, or goings backward, but alas they are come yet but to a little pitch in religion, their knowledge of the things of God is but little, that of the Apostle, *Heb.* 5. 12. is applicable to them. *Whereas for the time they might have been teachers of others, they had need be themselves taught the first principles of Religion*, and must be spoken to as Babes in Christ, such as had *need of milk, and not of strong meat*, and truly this is much the fault of good People, they do not grow in the knowledge of Christ, we see something of heat in them, in whom we want a great deal of light. Others seem to be increased in light, but to be decayed in heat, and warmth for God; sure we are we see a great decay of religion amongst Christians, or at least but a small improvement, they have in pro-

session seem'd to be such as have walk'd with God a long time, we do not see them running yet. *It is true, some plants grow downward in the root, when they do not grow upward into the air,* so as their growth is not so sensible, and discernable. So it is possible there may be some such Christians, who though their proficiency may not so much appear in their outward performances, which requires a growth in gifts, and parts, yet they may be grown more in *faith* and *love*, and *hatred of sin*, and *resolution for God*, &c. and this is a good *running*, in Grace; they grow best who grow in the root, not those who improve most, in leaves, and more exterior branches of Christian profession. 2. If Christians cannot satisfy themselves that they *run* in any sense, it would be enquired from whence they are hindered, whether from some cause from within or from without. 1. A man may be hindered in his *bodily running* by some inward *obstructions*, bodily *decay*, or *weakness*; this must be cured or purged out; Christians ought to search whether they have no secret lust, no love to the world, no greedy desire to be rich, nothing of sensuality which weakens their Souls, and keeps them from this running after Christ. 2. As a man may be kept from running from some external cause. So may a Christian also be hindered in his spiritual race, from some *ill company with which he is linked, from some impressions of his grand adversary the* Devil. From the *withdrawings of Divine Grace*, those measures of it I mean which are necessary to a Christians running, though not to the upholding of the spiritual life. If a *Christian* be hindred from such ill company as he cannot avoid, or from *some temptations* of *Sathan*, or from such *divine desertions*, he is the object of our pity, but not to be hastily censured or condemned, but in the mean time he ought to lie under convictions of his duty to run, though it be his misery, that at present he cannot run.

2 Br. *Secondly*, We may from hence learn one great reason, *Why many move not at all after God*; and also *of that uneven pace which is discernable even in the best of God's People.*

The greater part of the World moveth not after Christ at all. One Man runs after his sensual satisfactions, another after sensible enjoyments, making haste to be rich, few after Christ: What is the reason? The Scripture layeth the fault upon the immediate proximate cause, that *is*, *Man's perverse will*, he will not come to Christ that he might live; but there is an higher cause, for no more would any other Soul have done,

done, if the Lord had not drawn it, and made it partaker of his powerful, special Grace, had it pleased the Lord to have done as much for those other Souls, they would have come, they would have run likewise. But you will say then mens Damnation is from God, and is not caused so much from their not running, as from God's not drawing. I have before spoken to this Objection, but it comes again a cross me. I will add but a word, or two, or rather repeat what I have already said in the case.

The Objection were indeed considerable, if, 1. *God did not in some degree draw every Soul to whom the Gospel is preached,* 2. *If the Sinner did to his utmost obey those drawings,* and *God yet denied his further and more effectual Grace.* But as I have before shewed you, there is no Soul that liveth under the preaching of the Gospel, but is drawn, drawn by *Exhortations, Arguments, Promises of reward,* &c. the proper *Cords of a Man.* Nay, there are none amongst the Heathens, but are *drawn* by the *Cords of common gracious Providence,* God (saith the Apostle) *leaveth not them without witness.* Now though none of these Cords are sufficient to *draw* the Soul home to Christ, yet they are sufficient with that power which is left in the will of Man, to ingage him to many acts of *Reformation,* and to the *performance of many acts of moral discipline*; yea, and of *Religion* too, (that part of it, which lyeth in Bodily exercise) if men will not do what they have a power to do, how shall their destruction be from God, for denying them his special grace? Especially when we say, That although the good use of common Grace meriteth nothing at the hand of God, yet God doth never deny his *special Grace,* but *where common Grace is first wilfully abused*; and thus the destruction of Sinners lyeth at their own Doors, not because that if they would they might repent, believe, and turn to God, but because, that if they would, they might make such an use of the common Grace of God, as in the use of it, God would not be wanting to them in the giving them that further power to Spiritual acts, which they have not of themselves. But now if we rise higher, and enquire, how some come to use *common Grace* better than others, when all have an equal *Natural power,* to do those acts of *Moral discipline* and of *Religion* also, which extend no further then to a bodily labour; how it comes to pass, that some get leave of themselves, of their Lusts and Pas-

ons to do them, others do not? We must say there is an influence of God's Spirit of Grace more upon the one than the other inclining them thereto; but so long as others have a *Natural power* thus far which they do not use, God is acquitted of their Blood, and their Damnation is of themselves, though his abounding grace be more seen as to others whom he doth further incline to a better use of *common Grace*, and their natural abilities; but of this I have spoken before, and do now little more than repeat.

2. The same account must be given *of the uneven pace which is discernable in such as are Christians indeed.* The running of God's own People is not alike, though they have all the same renewed Nature, and inward principle of life, *To will is present with them all*, yet they have not all an equal strength to perform. Nor an equal life, *livelineſs*, *freedom*, and *chearfulneſs* in their walkings with God, there may be much blame to be laid upon themselves, for not using the Grace of God as they ought to do, not keeping their Watch as they ought to keep it, but the *Original cause* is the want of *Divine drawings*, which are sometimes with-held as a punishment to some loose and careless walking sometimes, as the *product of Divine Wisdom* for the exercise of some habits of Grace, which are not so well tryed and exercised under the full influences of divine grace upon them, as under the partial withdrawings of it.

There might be other uses made of this point, but they would be mostly such, as were proper to the former Doctrine, and there inlarged upon. So as I shall proceed no further in Application of this Discourse.

Serman XXIII.

Canticles 1. 4.

Draw me, and We will run after thee.

YOu have heard the Spouses *Petition* opened, what she means, when she saith to her Beloved, *Draw me*; you have heard her *Promise* or *Argument* opened, *We will run after thee.*

thee. She prayeth for *drawing*, she promiseth her *running*; *Drawing* was the act of her *beloved*. *Running* was her own Act, though in force of his drawing. But here is (as I before observed) an alteration of the Number. She saith, *Draw me*; She addeth, *We will run*. She begs but for one, she promiseth for more, she prayeth for her self, she promiseth for others. How is this?

1. I told you when I opened the words, that some by *We* understand, *The Spouse and the Spirit of* God in conjunction. I, and thy *Grace*. This is a Sense hinted by *Gerhard* and *De Pomis* upon the Text, and it may seem to have some colour from that of Christ, *Without me you can do nothing*, and that of *Paul*, Gal. 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God*. It is a great truth, that when ever the Soul runs after *Christ*, the holy Spirit assists its motion; but yet it is drawing, that is Christ's and his Spirits work, *running* is ours. *Grace* works together with the Child of God, but it worketh by drawing, the Soul works by running; it is not Christ or the Spirit of Christ that is in us, that runneth the way of God's Commandments, but it is the Soul of the Christian, in and with the strength, and power of Christ. *Grace* is the Principle of our Spiritual life, like the Spirit within *Ezechiels* Wheels, without which the Wheels move not; but they are the Wheels that move. I cannot therefore agree this sence.

2. *Bernard* hath another Notion, She begs (saith he) *The sowre part for her self, the sweeter part for others*, but this is an interpretation which to me seemeth to have many faults. 1. It maketh the *drawing* here prayed for, to be a *drawing by Afflictions*, which are indeed the Lord's Cords, but such as he seldom draweth Souls to Christ by, nor are they the proper matter of our Prayer. Secondly, *It turneth the Promise into a Prayer*, and makes the Sense to be to this purpose, Lord for me, *Draw me* with the Cords of Affliction: *Let others run after thee*; but I see no ground at all for such an Interpretation. It is not *others*, but *We*, she includeth her self. It is not, *let others run*, but *we will run*.

3. *Thirdly*, If by the *Spouse* we here understand the *Church* speaking, The Church being many yet make but *one Body*. So the Spouse prayeth for her *whole Body*, which is but one, and saith properly, *draw me*, and then *promiseth for every part*,

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Rom. 12. 5. *We being many are one Body*; She prayeth for Grace, she promiseth not only action, and obedience, but unity in her obedience and action, God's Kingdom is not divided against its self, not different from it self, especially in the Fundamentals of Faith, and Holiness. They are an Army in order, and fighting together against *the World*, *the Flesh*, and *the Devil*; but this still is more than I will run.

4. I rather choose another sence of this Promise. *A promise of an endeavour to cause others to run* after Christ, or a Prophecy that others would run, so as the sense should be this; *Lord draw me*, and *I will endeavour to be a cause of more than my own running after thee*; others seeing, or hearing of thy Grace and Goodness to me, shall also by my example be provoked to run after thee. In this sence I shall carry it. The Proposition resulting from hence is this,

Prop. *That God's sweet, and powerful drawing of one Soul, to, or after himself, will be a means of causing others also to run after him.*

God's drawing of *John*, 1 *John* 26. draweth first two other Disciples, who when they heard him, followed *Jesus*: and *Andrew* drew *Simon Peter*, v. 40, Christ's drawing of *Philip*, was the occasion of *Nathaniel*'s running, v. 45. *Philip findeth Nathaniel*, and saith unto him, *We have found him of whom* Moses *in the Law, and the* Prophets *did write*. Christ draweth the *Woman of* Samaria, *John* 4. v. 28. *She leaves her Water pot*, and goes her way into the City, and saith to the men of the City, *Come see a Man, which told me all things that I ever did, is not this the Christ? Then they went out of the City, and came unto him*, and v. 41. *Many more believed because of his own word.*

There are two main grounds upon which the truth of this Proposition depends. 1. The first is *the alluring nature of Divine* Grace. 2. The Second is, *The exceeding Charity of every pious Soul.* I will a little enlarge upon them.

1. I say, first, *Divine* Grace in the *effects of it is exceedingly attractive.* The love of God (saith the Apostle) *constraineth*; nor doth it only constrain the Soul in which it is shed abroad through the Holy Ghost, but it also constraineth others, at least to some inquiries after it. The Fathers kindness to one Child maketh every Child more studious to please him, and the Masters kind-

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nesse to one Servant, encourageth others to their duty. We have not perfect single Hearts, to act meerly in compliance with a precept, even *Moses* himself *had an eye to the recompence of reward.* Nor are we only incourag'd from the prospect of a futur recompence, but we must also be encouraged, from some promises, or hopes of present assistance. *Solomon* tells us, *The Sluggard saith, there is a Lion in the way.* We are prone to fancy Lions, where indeed there are none, The way of holiness is a plain and lightsome way, no rough nor dark way, God hath said, *Wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein*; but we know not how to adventure, and indeed there are *Lions* and *Mountains* in the way. The roaring Lion is in the way, who goeth about continually seeking whom may he devour, & we have Mountains of Lusts and Corruptions, as well as of *Worldly Temptations* that are in our way. Christ hath told us, that *his Yoke is easie, his burden is light.* We cannot understand it; Is it an easie thing to *deny our selves, to take up the Cross*, and to *follow Christ?* To keep a steady even pace with God? The very Thoughts of the difficulty of a Christians life, make many to turn away from it, looking upon the Yoke of Christ, as a Yoke which no Flesh and Blood is able to bear. But now the effects of Divine Grace upon one Soul here incourageth many others. We are like Travellers, going toward the City of God, we meet with Rivers over which we must pass, the River seems deep, and the Stream seems to run swift, here our Hearts fail; but as it is with earthly Travellers in such a case, if one ventures through, and gets safe on shore, then many follow: So when we see some that were under our discouragments from entring upon the ways of God, yet through Grace got into them, and finding them easie, and pleasant, this is a great encouragement to others. I have known some who have long stumbled at this Stone: Better never to know the way of Righteousness, never to enter into a course of Profession, than having entred into it to fall Back; that I shall do, I shall never be able to hold on in a course of Duty; I shall never conquer such Corruptions, &c. Now when God draweth but one Soul, others are incouraged to run, *Psal.* 40. v. 1, 2, 3. *I waited* (saith *David*) *patiently for the Lord, he inclined to me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible Pit, out of the miry Clay, and set my feet upon a Rock, and established my goings, and he hath put a new Song into my Mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear,* Mat. 11.30.

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and trust in the Lord. One blessed *Martyr*, is upheld by God, and Burns chearfully, his ashes set many others on fire. From hence it is that the conversation of Christians is a *Winning conversation*, and Christians are perswaded to walk, that others may be won by them. There is nothing unlovely in the effects of special Grace. Serenity and peace of Conscience, contentation in all Estates, Justice, and Charity towards men, they are all the effects of Grace, and exceeding lovely in the Eyes of all reasonable Creatures.

2. A second ground of this lyes in that *Charity, or good will toward men, which is the steady effect of this grace*; whosoever is taught of God to love God, is also taught to love men; all men with a love of good will, though the Saints only with a love of *complacency or delight.* Two things in pursuit of this will be found the effects of true Saving grace, in every Soul that hath been made partaker of it.

1. First, *Such a Soul will reveal the grace that it hath received.* 2. *It will excite, and quicken others to look after their share in the same grace.*

1. First, *A gracious Soul is alwayes communicative.* Grace, in the Soul, is like new Wine in the Bottle, which must have vent, see *David*, *Psal.* 66. 16. *Come, and hear all you that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul. I cried unto him with my Mouth, and he was extolled by my Tongue.* Christ when he healed the lame Man in the Gospel bid him, that he should tell no Man of it, yet he must go and publish it. He never when he heals a Soul, saith to it, *Tell no Man of it*, nay, he saith the quite contrary. *When thou art converted* (saith he to *Peter Strengthen thy Brethren*, *Luk.* 22. 32. Such a Soul cannot hold its peace. *Job* could not eat his bodily morsels alone, but much less can the Soul eat *his Spiritual Morsels*, and let none know of it. If the Woman in the parable could not find her lost Groat, but she must call in her Neighbours and spend it upon them, how shall a Man that discerns his lost Soul to be found, his lost *Peace*, and *strength*, and *liveliness* to be recovered not call his Neighbours, and tell them what God hath done for him? *Sorrow* and joy both fill the Heart, both pain it, the communication of either unto others in some degree easeth it. There are in the World Mysteries of other knowledge, which Men have and do very studiously conceal, *because* the more are

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made partakers of them, the worse it is for those who got the first knowledge, they get the less; but it is otherwise as to *Grace* that is an inexhaustible Fountain, all may have their fill of the Fountain of Living Waters, and the Soul that makes first discovery of it to another loseth nothing by the discovery. If *Abraham* knoweth any thing of the mind of God, he will *teach his Family*; therefore, God will not *hide from* Abraham, *what he intends to do to* Sodom. Several reasons might be given, why *grace* will not lye hid in the Soul: Such a Soul apprehends it self under some Obligation of duty, that of Christ to *Peter*, *when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren*, must not be understood as a special and particular precept. 2. The *Joy* of *that Soul*, that hath any evidence that it hath tasted of of this grace, is such as cannot be concealed; little Streams may be circumscribed by the Banks of the River; but great falls and flows of Water, will overflow them. We cannot bite in great passions. Nor can a greater joy fill the Soul, than that which ariseth from the sense of God's special love, either in the first Collation of it upon, or the returns of it unto the Soul.

3. Again this Soul knoweth, *That much of God's praise ariseth from his Peoples telling of his wondrous works*; you shall in Scripture observe it as a constant piece of God's Peoples thanksgiving, and what we are often called to for. Now the good report which a pious Soul makes of Christ, hath a great influence upon others. If a Physicians Name be up, if but two or three Neighbours make a report, what wonderful Cures he hath done in, and for them, all in like Circumstances will be running to him. See what *David* saith, *Psal.* 34. 2. *My Soul shall make her boast in the Lord, the humble shall hear thereof and be glad.* v. 6. *This poor Man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his Troubles.* When a gracious Soul makes its boast in the Lord, relates with joy and thankfulness, what God hath done for it: The *humble*, that is, those that are in poor, afflicted conditions, they hear of it, and are glad, and are encouraged to go to God. They say, Here's a poor Soul that cried, and the Lord heard it, and saved it out of all its troubles. This is the first way, by which Souls once drawn are a means to make others run, by making a good report of God unto them. But this is not all.

2. Secondly, Such a Souls Charity extendeth further, *viz. To an exciting, exhorting, and quickening of others, to labour to be*

made partakers of the same grace. Come (saith the Woman of *Samaria*) *and see the Man that hath told me all things that I ever did, Is not this the Christ?* Come saith the Soul, and taste of that love which hath so refreshed me; my Soul was as *sad as yours.* God hath comforted me; as dead as yours, The Lord hath quickned me. I had once as much prejudice against the ways of God as you; I once thought them as difficult: I now delight in them. I find now the *Yoke of Christ is easie, his burden is light. Come, let us go up together to the Mountain of the Lord's House, he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths.* I will shew you in two or three words, from whence it is that a Soul that hath tasted the special grace of God, will be so busie with others to bring them into the same circumstances with it self.

1. It knoweth *that it shall lose nothing by others running.* Nature makes us all in the first place to secure our own Interest, but that being first secured, good nature obligeth all Men to wish the best they can to others, and the *Moralists* give it us for a Rule, *That those kindnesses ought to be denied to none which we can do them without any prejudice to our selves.* There is no Soul that hath received any thing of the *special grace of God,* but knoweth something of the value of it, and that no so great kindness can be done for another, as to be an Instrument to bring men and Women acquainted with that grace of God which bringeth Salvation, *Acts* 26. 29. *I would to God* (saith *Paul* to *Agrippa*) *that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these Bonds.* This Soul knoweth, that it should be never the poorer, if all others were inriched with the riches of Grace. All *Envy* which maketh us pine at the good of others is taken out of the heart of a Child of God, (it is one of those lusts that are mortified in it.)

2. Nay further, *It knows that the more Souls it can be a means to bring to Heaven, the more welcome it self shall be.* Those who win *Souls are wise,* and *those who win many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars, for ever and ever,* Dan. 12. 3. It was Christs work to *bring many Sons unto Glory.* It was *David's* Language, and he spoke in the Person of Christ, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren, in the midst of the Congregation I will praise thee.* The Propagation of its Species, is one of the most perfect acts of the Creature. It is a great piece of the perfection of a Christian, to propagate his Species. The

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Romans designed rewards for the Father of such a number of Children; God hath prepared great rewards for those that are co-workers with him in bringing Souls unto Christ.

3. Lastly, Such a Soul knows the *Price of a Soul, and the sad condition of those who want Christ either in the first, or further influences of his special grace*, and so doth it out of mere pity and commiseration. None knows the misery of a Christless Soul, so well as that Soul, that hath been lost, and is now found, hath been dead, and is now alive. None so well knows the misery of that poor Creature whose Conscience is upon a Rack, or whose Soul is under a Divine desertion, crying out, *Where is my God become?* We never well understand the misery of others, nor throughly pity them under any misery till our selves have felt it. Nor on the other side do we ever understand the riches of Grace, the consolations of the Spirit, or the Soul satisfaction which a Christian hath in God and in his ways, till we have in some measures had experience of them. Hence it is that a natural man is so unconcerned, in the natural state of his Relations, it is because his own Eyes are not open; he wants *Faith*, he doth not see the misery of a Soul that is without Christ, nor doth he believe what God hath in his Word revealed as to the state of such Souls. But the Spiritual Man whose Eyes God hath opened, (knowing God's terrors) persuades with others to get out of the horrible Pit; the believing Soul, giving a firm and steady assent to what God hath revealed in his Word about the Eternal State of Souls, and the only way to happiness, cannot but Night and Day persuade with others those especially in whom it is most nearly concerned, that they would be reconciled to God, and flee from that Wrath which is to come.

1st Use.

In the first place, *This puts an argument into our Mouths to use with God, when we go unto him for any influences of special grace.* Say unto God, *Draw me, and we will run after thee.* Tell him that his drawing thy Soul, will not only ingage thee, but be a means also to make others to run after God. It was *David's* argument, *Psal.* 51. 12, 13. *Restore unto me the joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach Transgressors thy way and Sinners shall be converted unto thee.* An Argument which he often made use of. *The humble shall hear thereof and be glad*, Psal. 34. 2. An Argument whose force lyeth, in the *concern of Gods glory.* The glory of God is the great end of all his actions, he doth all that he doth for his own glo-

ry, and he useth a great argument with God that tells him, that if he doth such a thing for him, there will a great deal of glory by it accrue to his holy Name. God is glorified by nothing more, than by our, and others running after him.

2d. Use. Secondly, This discourse will *let us see a difference between one who is a Christian indeed, and one who is only a Christian in name.* An Hypocrite would seem to be something, but is nothing, he doth nothing, he is inconcerned in the good of others Souls, whereas, if he were a true Plant of righteousness, he would cast his Seed. *Prov.* 10. 21. *The Lips of the Righteous feed many.* It is an ill sign that there is a truth of grace wanting in that Soul, in which are found no endeavours to propagate the knowledge & fear of God.

3d. Use. But I shall shut up my Discourse upon this Argument with a word of *Exhortation*, to all those who profess themselves to have received the *special grace of God*; So to manage their conversation, that others by their examples, or by their means may be provoked to run after Christ. Christ tells his Disciples, *Mat.* 5. 13. *That they were the Salt of the Earth*: and v. 14. *The light of the World, a City set upon an Hill*; that God had not lighted *up a light in their Souls to be hid, for no Man lighteth a Candle to put to it under a Bushel* (saith he) *but to be set on a Candlestick, that it might give light to all them that are in the House.* Upon this he foundeth an Exhortation, v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* I see no reason to restrain those Texts unto those that are the Ministers of the Gospel; they are true of all true Christians, the Children of God in the World, are the *Salt of the World*, and it is their duty to season others. They are the *light of the World*, and to shew light to the World; they are obliged so to live that being themselves drawn, others also by their means may run after Christ. You will say to me how shall this be? How should a Christian so live as to draw others to run after Christ. I answer It will very much depend upon, 1. The *Seriousness of his pious behaviour towards God.* 2. The *Humility and Innocency*, and *quietness of his behaviour toward men.* 3. *His abounding in good works.* 4. His *Communicativeness* both of his *Gifts*, and of his *Experiences.* I will a little inlarge upon all these.

1. I say First, It will much depend upon the *Evenness, and Seriousness of a Christians pious behaviour toward God.* Religion is in it self a lovely thing, and many who cannot get leave of themselves

ſelves to be pious, and devout, yet are conſtrained to commend it in others, where they ſee the Practitioners in it *ſerious*, and *even* in their practice, for nothing is more odious even to common Eyes, than to ſee men act a part in Religion; but for a Chriſtian in praying to pray, in hearing to hear, to be ſerious and in earneſt in his acts of devotion, ſo to demean himſelf, that he ſhall appear to others to mind what he is about, to be fervent in Spirit while he is ſerving the Lord, is lovely in all mens account; to ſee men gaping about the Church whiles they are pretending to pray, ſleeping, or talking when they are pretending to hear the Word of God, winneth none, but rather eſtrangeth the World from God and makes them think there is nothing in Religion but a vain ſhew: But to ſee a Chriſtian ſerious, and ſervent in prayer, diligent and attentive in hearing, hanging as it were upon the Preachers Lips, as it is ſaid of thoſe who heard Chriſt, *Luke* 19. 48. (we tranſlate it *they were very attentive* to hear him, the *Greek* is they did hang upon *him*) this makes People think there is ſomething in Godlineſs: Eſpecially when men are *even* in their pious converſation, that their warmth in Piety, is not by fits, but there are the ſame at all times, having to do with the ſame God, and being in the ſame ſervice of God.

2. A ſecond thing upon which the inciting others to come to, and to run after Chriſt, doth much depend, is *Chriſtians behavior towards men*; ſo three things much commend the grace of God to the World.

1. *Humility.* Pride, and ſelf exalting, are generally odious to all men, and men (as it were by a natural inſtinct) conclude there is nothing of God in thoſe in whom they ſee much of *Pride*, diſcovered by an *immoderate boaſting*, *uncharitable judging*, and *cenſuring*, *ſupercilionſneſs*, a *ſcorn*, and *contempt* of others; but now where men have the advantage of the Word of God, which commands men to deny themſelves to be *cloathed with humility*, in honour to prefer others before themſelves, to learn of Chriſt for he is *meek*, and *lowly*, &c. they are much more confirmed in this; and any thing of pride in Chriſtians doth rather eſtrange men from God and Chriſt, then cauſe them to run after him.

2. *Innocency* in Chriſtians is another thing, which much commends the ways of God to others. Chriſt commanded his Diſciples

ciples to be *wise as Serpents, innocent as Doves*. *Paul* exhorteth the *Philippians*, 2. *Phil.* 15. to be *blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke*. Most People have a natural Notion of God that he is full of *goodness*, and doth no Man *harm*; and those who are in any measure acquainted with the Scriptures, observe that Christ's conversation on Earth was an innocent, harmless conversation, the Apostle, *Heb.* 7. 26. calleth him, not only *undefiled*, and *separate from Sinners*, but *holy*, and *harmless*. Now an *innocent* conversation implieth righteousness, in all *injustice* there must be harm done to others.

3. A third thing that makes an *honest and winning Conversation towards men is quietness and peaceableness* in opposition to *Tumultuousness*, *Sedition*, and *quarreling*. The Apostle commands us to study to be *Quiet*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 11. I need not enlarge upon this, Experience tells you how much a quietness, and peaceableness of behaviour obligeth the World, and how much a contrary temper disobligeth it from Men and Women professing to Religion and Godliness. God is the *God of Peace*, and delighteth not in confusion.

3. A third thing upon which much depends, the winning and gaining of others to run after Christ is *abounding in good works*. I here restrain the Notion of good works, understanding by them acts of *Mercy* and *Charity* towards men. Our Saviour bids us *make our selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*, and by it teacheth us, that *good works* of this Nature, are not unprofitable as to our own Souls, though they are no fit price to purchase Heaven with. But they are also of great use to *save the Souls of others*, as they have a tendency to commend the grace, and ways of God unto other men. On the other side, acts of *Oppression*, *Cruelty*, *and uncharitableness*, have a great malignity, to estrange Souls from Religion and Godliness. It is a sad story I have somewhere met with upon the Cruelty shewed by the *Spaniards* to the *Indians* upon their pretended converting them to the Faith of the Gospel; A great Person of the *Indians* would know whither the Souls of the *Spaniards* went when they died, to *Heaven* or to *Hell*; and being told they went to Heaven, replied, *Then he would go to Hell*. Being it seems naturally persuaded that cruel, bloody, and uncharitable men could never be happy in another life.

4. I will add a fourth thing (though not beforementioned) which

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experience hath constantly shewed us to be of very great force, to draw others, *viz. A bold, and courageous Suffering for the Name of Christ.* It hath been a constant Observation, that *the Blood of Martyrs hath been the seed of the Church.* Men naturally are inclined to think there is a great deal in that Religion, which will make men so Valiant as to die in the defence and asserting of it. There is yet one thing more upon which this much depends; that is,

5. *A Christians communicativeness both of his gifts, and of his experiences.* 1. Of his *gifts*, his *knowledge* and other gifts, by which he informs Christians of the Truth, and perswades, and argues them out of their sinful courses. *Come* (saith *David*) *I will teach you the fear of the Lord*; O that there were more of this in the World than there is! how few are those Christians that have either grace or confidence enough to mind others of their conditions and to call upon them to look after Eternity! We can call upon our Children and Friends to mind their Worldly concerns, we are communicative enough to them of what we know, which may help them as to them; but how little do we call upon them to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate, to make their Calling and Election sure.* What should the reason of this be? Is it unbelief, or is it carelesness? Is it *unbelief*? do we not then believe an *Immortal, Eternal state of Souls*, into which no Souls can come, but by and through Christ as the way? It cannot be, this is the Object of our Hope, it is the great thing we have in expectation; if we had hope only in this Life, we were of all men most miserable. Are we confident that our Children, our Friends, or Neighbours are in the road to this blessed state? Certainly there are many of them of whom we can have no such hopes. How are we then silent? if we know better things then they know, why do we not instruct them? Sr. *John* saith, *He that hath of this Worlds goods, and seeth his Brother in want and releives him not, how dwells the love of God in him?* 1*Jo.* 3. 17. What shall we say of those who have of the goods that relate to another World, the Treasures of Spiritual knowledge and seeth his Child, his Friend in want, and (to his power) relieves him not, how dwells the love of God, or of his Childs, or Friends Soul in him? *Dalilah* asked *Sampson*, how he could say to her, that he loved her, when he kept his secrets from her, which she was not concerned to know; but how

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canst thou say, thou lovest thy Yoke-fellow thy Child, thy Friend, and concealest from them what thou knowest with reference to their Spiritual and Eternal good, and which it is as much their concern to know as it is thine? I remember Christ doth thus prove himself his Disciples friend, *John* 15. 15. *I have called you Friends, for all things which I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you*; that is, all things which my Father hath let me know, and which are of concern for you to know. Thus Christ hath discharged the Office of a Friend to our Souls, and should not we do likewise? Do we know any thing concerns our near Friends Souls with reference to their Eternals happiness, and do we conceal our knowledge from them, how do we discharge the Office of Friends to them? how dwells either the love of God, or the love of them in our Souls?

2. Nor is the communicativeness of our own *Experiences*, What we have seen, as well as what we have heard, *of less use*, or *less our duty*. I know it is a thing which profane Persons may mock at, but let them mock on, *Wisdom shall be justified of her Children*. I am sure we meet with *David* and *Paul*, and others of the Servants of God of whom we have a sacred Record very frequent in it. *Come* saith *David*, and *I will tell you what God hath done for my Soul*. I know Men may boast beyond their line, or measure, they may boast of experiences they never had; experiences must be fulfillings of Promises. But certainly there can be nothing as a mean more powerful to draw others to a running after Christ in the ways of Holiness then the knowledge of what others have found, and experienced in them. I am sure it was the practice of the *Woman* of *Samaria*, of *Andrew* and *Peter*, and that with great success. O let every one of us who have in our hearts any love for God, *any zeal* for the glory of God, any kindness for the Souls of others, being our selves drawn, so behave our selves, that others, allured by our examples, perswaded by our arguments may also run after Christ. Let those that cannot as yet discern the *Savour of his good Ointments* be helped to discern them at second hand, while *our Lips feed many, and our Garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes and Cassia.*

Sermon

Sermon XXIV.

Cant. 1. 4.

—*The King hath brought me into his Chambers.*

I Have done with the Spouses *Petition*, *Draw me*, and with the argument by which she impleaded her Petition. She would then *run after him*, and of the alteration of the *number*, in the *promise*, *we* will run, not I, but *we*. I come now to the third thing which I took notice of in the verse which I called, *The Spouses* attestation of her beloveds favour in the answer of her Petition. That is in the words I have now read. *The King hath brought me* הדריני unto his in *Ward-Rooms* חדריו or his Closet. *His Chambers* (so we translate it.) What is necessary for the opening of the words, you have heard before.

It was but even now that we heard the Spouse praying, *draw me*; and promising that if the Lord would hear, and answer her Prayers, both *she* and *others would run after him*. How presently is her tone altered, and her prayer turned into praise? Hence I observed;

Prop. *That God is pleased sometimes to make a very quick return to his Peoples Prayers.* But before I handle this, I shall take a little notice of the name she here giveth to her *Beloved*, המלך *the King*. The word is the same, that is every where used, to express the *sole dominion* of a Person over others; a term very properly given to Christ, and that not only as he is *God over all blessed for ever*, and so the Psalmist telleth us, that *his Throne is established in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all*; but in respect of his *Mediatory Kingdom*, as he is the Lords *King, whom he hath set upon his holy Hill of* Sion, *Psal.* 2. 6. to whom he hath given the Heathen *for his inheritance, and the uttermost part of the Earth for his possession*, v. 8. which Kingdom he doth not only exercise over all, in order to the gathering of his Church, subduing the hearts of people unto himself, and then over his

Church, gathered, by *giving laws* to it, and setting Officers over it, but more particularly in the hearts of all *believers*, in whom he ruleth by his Spirit. But why doth the Spouse here speak to her beloved or of her beloved, in this lofty stile, and not rather in that familiar stile which she generally useth in this Song? What if we should say?

1. That in other places of this Divine Song, she *is speaking to him*, here she is *speaking of him*. God is the *King of Kings*, the *Lord of Lords*; yet when we pray unto him, we are licensed and commanded to say unto him, *Our Father*; when she speaks of him to others, she useth another stile, and saith, *the King*; though we are allowed an *holy boldness* in our accesses, and addresses to the Throne of Grace, yet this is not exclusive of that *holy fear and reverence* which we owe unto God as our *King*, we ought to remember, that he who is our *Beloved* [our *Father*] is also our *King*.

2. What if we should say that this lofty compellation is used, *to enhance the favour that she had received*? She was not admitted into ordinary Chambers, but into *Royal Chambers*; the *King* hath brought me into his Chambers. No words are too big to express the singular favour of God to our Souls.

3. What (finally) if we should say that she changeth her stile to *intimate the persons who must expect signal favour from God, and to remember her self of her duty*, in consideration of such favours? I say first to intimate to us who those Persons must be, that expect any singular favours from God; they must be such, as apprehend and receive Christ, not for a Saviour as a Priest only, but such as own, and acknowledge him as a *King*, as their *Lord* to command, and to rule over them, according to that promise, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he who loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self unto him.* It might also remember her of the duty she owed unto God, in consideration of his favour to her, she resolveth to own, and to acknowledge him, as her *Lord*, her *King*. But these things being premised, I come to that *Proposition* which I raised from the connexion of these words, testifying, the Lords hearing of her Prayers; the words are immediately annexed to her Petition. Whence I observed,

Prop. *That it pleaseth God sometimes to make very quick returns to his Peoples*

Peoples Prayers. That it is so, appears. 1. *By the Lords answering his People sometimes before they speak, or while they are speaking,* Isaiah 65. 24. *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Nothing can be quicker then that, for God to take notice of what his people have in their hearts to ask, and to give it, before they can form it by their lips into words, or while they are speaking, to give an answer, you have the first exemplified in *David, Psal.* 32. 5. *I said I will confess my transgression unto the Lord,* he had not confessed, he had only said in his heart that he would confess his transgression to the Lord, and (saith he) *thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin,* you have an instance of the latter in *Hannah,* the Wife of *Elkanah,* 1 *Sam* 1. She was praying, her lips moved, but her voice was not heard, yet the Lord heard her, and though the time must be fulfilled before she could have a Son, yet 1 *Sam,* 1. 18. It is said of her at present, *that she went away, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.* She had a present answer of peace, her mind was quieted, her countenance was no more sad, you have another instance in *Daniel* (to name no more,) *Dan.* 9. 20. *Daniel* with the rest of the Jews had been in the captivity of *Babylon,* near 70 years, the time was almost expired, as to which God had promised they should come out, *Daniel* sets himself to pray, and you have a copy of his prayer from *Dan.* 9. *v.* 4. *to v.* 20. Observe now, *v.* 20. *And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my People* Israel, *yea, v.* 21. *While I was speaking in prayer, the man* Gabriel, *whom I had seen in a vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me, about the time of the evening oblation, and he informed me, and talked with me, and said,* O Daniel, *I am now come forth to give thee skill, and understanding; at the beginning of thy supplication the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee, for thou art greatly beloved,* &c. Here now the Lord made a very quick return to *Daniels* prayer, while he was speaking, the Lord answered him.

But a return of prayers may be *quick,* though it be not thus quick, but after the interval of some few months, days, or years; *Abraham* was thus answered as to his Prayer mentioned, *Gen.* 17. and *David* glorieth in the assurance of this, *Psal.* 4. 3. *The Lord will hear when I call upon him.* But now, because on the one hand this is a very desirable mercy, and many times the Souls of

Gods people are discouraged, and flagg in duty, because the vision is yet for an appointed time; It will not be out of our way to inquire, *what prayers these are that meet with so quick an audience from God*, God doth not this at all times, nor for all persons, no, not for those who are most beloved of him. *David* himself complaineth; *Psal.* 22. 2. *O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.* The Church complains of some times, *when God is angry with the prayers of his people*, *Psal.* 80. 4. Gods own People sometimes shoot arrow after arrow, to find what they shot first; hence you so often meet with it as a piece of the Saints Prayer, *Hear my prayer O God, give ear to my Supplications.* Let us a little enquire from whence this variety of Providence proceeds, as to this hearing, and answering of prayers. God is the Lord that changeth not, therefore we are not consumed, we must therefore find the cause in the persons praying, or in the prayers which maketh this difference as to Gods answers. That so quick and gracious answers may be obtained, something is necessary on the *party praying*: Something *with respect to the matter prayed for*: Something *as to the manner of putting up the prayer.*

1. As to the *Person praying*, 1. No Soul can expect such an answer, unless persons in *special favour* with God; this the Angel told *Daniel*, Dan. 9. 23. *At the beginning of thy supplication, the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee*, &c. *for thou art greatly beloved.* Ordinary subjects may have their petitions answered, but they must be favourites, that have the Kings ear presently; those Souls to whom God gives present answers of prayers are ordinarily such as are *beloved, greatly beloved.* A good natured Mother may help a Child that is another persons, being in any ill circumstances, and crying to her aloud, and fiercely, but it is a sign the Child is her own, when her bowels yern towards it as soon as it begins to cry, yet I find two instances at least in Scripture of Gods present answering the cries of persons in no such state of favour with God, *Ahab* and the *King* of *Nineveh*, 1 *Kin.* 21. 27, 28, 29. & *Jonas* 3. 4. But besides, that those instances relate meerly to *temporal mercies*, and such wherein not those Persons alone, but great bodies of people were concerned; and in such cases, as nothing but a present answer could have done them good, as to the thing wherein they were heard, *Nineveh* was within *forty days* of

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ruine, and it was only a deferring of that judgment which God had threatned, as to which they were heard, I say besides these things, it is one thing what God may do out of the abundance of his goodness, and mercy, and *another thing, what they may with any confidence expect.* It is most certain that persons who are strangers, and enemies to God, and so under a threatning, *That although they make many prayers, God will not hear them*; and of whom God hath said, *that their sacrifices are abomination*, cannot hope that the Lord should answer, much less presently answer their prayers. 2. As to a *present answer of prayers, it is necessary not only that the persons praying be believers*, persons in favour with God, *but that their prayers be prayers of faith*, that they exercise faith in their prayers, *James* 1. 5. *If any of you want wisdom; let him ask of God.* ---- But v. 6. *Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the Sea, driven of the wind, and tossed*, and James 5. 15. *The prayer of faith shall save the sick*; Prayers for Persons *sick*, ordinarily require present answers, now saith the Apostle, the prayer which saveth the sick, must be the *prayer of faith.* This is a point not well understood, *viz.* how to *pray in faith*, and what exercise of faith is required in prayer, I shall therefore shortly open it, and shew you what exercises of faith are necessary to that Soul, that would have his prayers at all answered, at least who can expect a present answer.

1. *Faith in prayer must respect Gods being and goodness.* This the Apostle informeth us, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He who cometh unto God, must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek him.* That God is, and that he is *able* to give what we ask of him; *Believe you* (saith Christ to the blind man) *that I am able to do this?* If God be, if he be God, he is able to do whatsoever we ask of him. But this is not all, we must also *believe the goodness of God; That he is a rewarder of them that seek him*: one who hath said to the Children of Men, *seek ye my face, and who never said to the seed of* Jacob, *seek ye my face in vain.* This is the first act of faith in prayer, whosoever cometh to seek God for any mercy, must steadily agree to this, That God is, and is able to grant the thing he asks of him, and that he is infinitely good, and a rewarder of those Souls, that obey his will in that precept, *seek ye my face.*

2. *Faith must respect that promise which God hath made for that*

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mercy, or good thing which we come to God for. There is hardly any particular good thing, for which God hath not somewhere in his word made a particular promise; now this promise is Gods bond, which faith lais hold on, and prayer puts in suit, if we want a particular promise, respecting the specifical mercy, yet there are general promises, within the latitude of which those particular good things fall, such as those, *Psal.* 84.11. *He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly,* Psal. 34. 10. *They that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing,* Rom. 8. 24. *We know that all things work together for them that love God,* 1 Cor. 3. 22. 23. *All things are yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods.* Now I say that he that prayeth in faith, must have his Eye either upon some of these more general words, in which God hath promised all good things, or those particular promises, wherein God hath promised that specifical mercy, which he comes to ask of God, *Mar.* 11. 24. *What things soever you desire when you pray, believe that you shall receive them, and you shall have them.* It is not only necessary that when we go unto God in prayer, we should Eye him, as the *fountain of power,* so able to grant what we ask of him, and as the *fountain of goodness,* so willing to relieve all the streights, and supply all the necessities of poor creatures; but 3. *As a God of truth and faithfulness,* that he believe that he shall receive what he asketh of God, and to this end he must see the good thing either generally, or particularly promised.

3. There is yet a third act of faith necessary, which is *a casting of our Souls upon God in the promise, a trusting in him for the receit of the thing we have asked of him. James* saith, *we must ask in faith nothing wavering,* the Soul must not doubt within itself, whether God hears, or will give in a gracious answer, yea or no, but commit itself wholly to God, upon the credit of his promise, believing that he who hath promised, is able to perform, and trusting in him for a performance. This is now praying in faith, and the truth is, all other praying is but praying in formality, of which we can expect no more profit then ariseth from a meer bodily labour. This, now is necessary with reference to an answer, especially a quick and a present answer, on the part of the person praying.

2. But something also is necessary to be observed, *with respect to the matter that we pray for.*

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2. It must be *something which is truly and really good for us and of which we stand in need.* Our need of a thing, and the goodness of it for us, is not to be measured from our sense, and apprehension, for we are often mistaken, and do not keep what is good for our selves, and therefore must refer our selves to the *wisdom of God*, who knoweth what things we have need of. It is true that there are some things so perfectly, and absolutely good, as they can never be evil; such are the *pardon of our sins*, the *love*, and *favour of God*, &c. But there are other things that are not so, which at some time we may have a need of, and they would be good to us, at another time we have no need of, but they would be hurtful, and pernicious to us, and this is the reason why our supplications for some things may be absolute, and peremptory, for other things they ought to be limited, conditioned, and put up with a reference of our selves to the will, and wisdom of God; God cannot give *evil things* unto his Children, though they ask them never so importunately, never so frequently. This our Saviour hath taught us, *Luke* 11. 11. 12. *If a Son shall ask Bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a Serpent. Or if he shall ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? if therefore you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, Mat.* 7. 11. it is, *give good things to them that ask him.* It is most certain, that no one would ask things that are, or would be hurtful to him, wittingly. Children through ignorance may, but if they do, their parents that have more wisdom, will not give them such things. No more will our Heavenly Father, who knows it is nothing but ignorance that causeth us to ask any thing of that nature. And this may help us to understand Gods dispensations, and satisfy the people of God, though they have not all those things they ask of God, if they be such things as are not absolutely, and perfectly good, they may be such things as the Lord knoweth under our circumstances, would be evil and pernicious to us, and we are answered by being denied them, for though through our weakness and ignorance we asked them, as believing them to be good, yet had we known them as indeed they were, we would have prayed against them. The things we ask, must be good, and such things as we stand in need of (indeed therein lies the nature of goodness) or they

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are no matter of a promise, and consequently ought to be made no matter of prayer, nor would be but for our infirmity and weakness, and consequently they may be denied us, and we may never have an answer, by receiving the things which we ask, but are answered, in having them denied to us.

2. *What we ask must be according to the will of God,* 1 Joh. 5. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to the will of God, he heareth us.* The Spirit *maketh intercession for us, according to the will of God.* Indeed this doth very little differ from the other, for whatsoever is *good for us,* is doubtless *according to the will of God.* It is Gods will that no good thing should be with-held from them who live uprightly. But there is yet something further that I shall add under this head, which is necessary in order to the receiving of a present answer from God; If we would have a present answer, we must ask for such things, not only as it is the *will of God we should have,* but as it is according to the will of God we should have at *such a time as we ask,* and *under such circumstances as we then are. Solomon* telleth us, *there is a time for all things.* God hath appointed *times* and *seasons* for all his dispensations of providence, he had not only promised *Canaan* to the seed of *Abraham,* but he had set the time, after *four hundred and thirty years*; he had not only promised a deliverance, out of the *Captivity* of *Babylon,* but he had also set the time *seventy years.* Hence, *Daniel* was presently heard, when he prayed, the Text telleth you; that he understood by Books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord *came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of* Hierusalem. *Then he set his face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting,* &c. *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. and while he was speaking, God gave him an answer. To *Habakkuk* it fell out otherwise, he put up a prayer to to God, ch. 1. his answer was, ch. 3. v. 3. *The Vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, it shall not lie, tho it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Had the believing Jews prayed never so often, never so seriously, for the coming of the seed of *Abrahams* out of *Egypt,* and going into *Canaan* before the four hundred years were expired, they could have neither expected, nor received any present answer, other than according to the tenor of that to *Habakkuk*; because, *Gen.* 15. 16, 17. Though God had promised *Abraham,*

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that he would give unto his Seed the land of Canaan, yet he had also told him, *that they should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and they should serve them, and they should afflict them*, 400 *years*---*but afterwards they should come out with great substance*, and v. 16. *In the fourth generation his Seed should come again into* Canaan. All things are seen by an Omniscient Eye, and ordered by an *eternal thought*. Now where the believing prayer meets with an eternal thought, as to the time of the mercy, there the answer is alwaies present. See therefore how confidently the *Psalmist* prayeth, *Psal.* 202. 12. *Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon* Sion, *for the time to favour her, yea, the set time is come*; when the time, the set time for God to favour a *Nation*, or a particular Soul is come, then the answer is alwaies present. It is therefore the great wisdom of a Christian, before he sets himself to pray, to inquire so far as he may, whether Gods set time for the collation of the mercy is come.

But will a good Christian say, *How shall I ever find out this, how shall I know when Gods set time to favour his Church, or to favour my, or anothers particular Soul is come? Times and seasons are not in our hands, nor within the compass of our knowledge.* The case indeed was plain as to the Jews, with reference to their servitude in *Ægypt*, and Captivity in *Babylon*. God had then revealed it to, and by his Prophets, but we have no such revelations now concerning Nations, or Churches, much less concerning particular Souls. It may be my Soul is under the power of some violent and impetuous temptations, under the pressure of some strong lusts and corruptions, in some dark hour of desertion, I find promises in the case in Holy Writ; these promises are sufficient grounds for me to pray, but if my prayer must be suited to Gods will, as to the time, how shall I ever know how to perform my duty, how shall I ever pray in faith? Obj.

1. As we say in our law; *When in any contract for payment of any sum of money, no particular time is expresst for the payment, the present time is to be understood*: So God having made promises to his people, which shall most certainly in their Season be fulfilled, and having not expressed the particular time when God will fulfill them to this, or that particular Soul: The Soul is warranted at all times, to ask them of God, for we may certainly pray for any thing which is not contrary to Gods revealed will. Ans.

2. But secondly, *We knowing that God in his secret purpose, hath determined not only the beings, but the circumstances of all things, cannot infallibly expect present answers of our prayers, by giving us the very things which we ask of God.* Suppose now a Christian under the power of some strong and impetuous temptation, whether from his flesh, or from his grand adversary, he may pray for *deliverance* from it, because God hath promised an happy issue of temptations, he may pray in faith, *Eying Gods power*, his *goodness*, his *truth*, and *faithfulness*, and being fully persuaded that God will deliver him, nay, he may pray for a speedy issue and deliverance (with submission to the will, and wisdom of God;) you have it in the case of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. When the Lord had given him *a thorn in his flesh to buffet him* (what that thorn in the flesh was, whether some impetuous motion to sin, from within, or without, we know not, be it what it will, it was a great burthen, a great affliction) *Paul prays* to be *delivered*, and *prayeth thrice*, and no doubt prayed in faith, but his desires met not with Gods set time, his answer was, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee.* Suppose a Soul walking in the dark, and seeing no light, it prayeth with *David*, *when wilt thou comfort me*; possibly God is not pleased, yet to visit it with his consolation, yet its prayer is warranted from the promise, God hath promised us the manifestations of the Spirit, *Joh.* 14. 21. It prayeth in faith, believing that God is able to do it, believing that he is full of goodness, a *rewarder of them that seek him*, believing that it shall receive even that particular mercy from God in Gods time; but it cannot pray in faith, believing that it shall *presently be comforted.* Because as to this it [illegible]th hath no bottom, no promise to lay hold upon; but yet even as to this it may pray *in faith*, having confidence in God, that if it be truly good for it, it shall be presently answered.

Thirdly, *When a Soul findeth that Gods ends in the affliction are obtained, and that it is in such a frame as God hath required a people, or a soul to be, to whom such promises are made, it may then conclude that Gods time, his set time is come.* Here are now two rules to guide an inquisitive Christian in the knowledge of Gods *set time*, for the collation of any mercy which he hath promised, whether more publick and national, or more private, or personal. 1. *When Gods ends in afflicting are obtained, and satisfied.* We say that God and nature do nothing in vain, indeed every

ry rational agent propounds to himself an end of all his or her actions. Brute Creatures, and such as are not indued with reason, move and act for some end or other, but their end is set them by another. But rational agents propound an end to themselves, and their ends being obtained, their action ceaseth. God is the highest rational agent, and propoundeth to himself an end in all his actions, and his end is alwaies good, his supreme end is his own glory, that is the best end, and he cannot act for one more ignoble, but his mediate ends, that is, by which he proposeth to get himself glory, they are several, you shall see much of them expressed in that one text, *Hosea* 5. 15. *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face. In their affliction they will seek me early.* There are also other texts of Scripture, which let us know Gods ends in the affliction of his people, such as those, *Jer.* 9. 7. *I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the Daughter of my people?* Zech. 13 9. *And I will bring the third part through the fire, & I will refine them as Silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tryed, they shall call on my name, and I will hear them, I will say it is my people, and they shall say, the Lord is my God.* From these Scriptures now appear three great ends, the obtaining of which, he aimeth at, that thereby he might be glorified.

1. The first is *a bringing them to the acknowledgment of their transgressions, and an humbling of them in the apprehension of them.* God by punishing us, whether in our flesh, or with more internal troubles in our minds, brings our iniquities to our remembrance, & saies to us in every affliction, *Know therefore, & see that it is an evil and bitter thing that thou hast done, in that thou hast departed from the living God, & that his fear hath not been within thee;* and this is one thing which he aimeth at, to bring his people to be vile, & low in their own Eyes, when this is done, Gods end is ordinarily fulfilled. Hence you shall observe, that before Gods promise of a gracious return to his People, *Jer.* 3. 14, 15. there is put in v. 13. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God;* so that if our affliction hath brought us to this acknowledgment of our iniquities, and a lying low before God, it may give us encouragement to hope that Gods time, his set time is come, for though he hath not particularly told us the day, and hour, when he will return unto his people, either in a way of special providence, or in a way of

special grace, yet he having annexed the promise of his gracious returns to his peoples acknowledgment of their offences, and humbling themselves, he hath effectually told them, that when that is done, is the time when they may expect to seek his face, with a speedy success, and gracious issues.

2. A second end which God aimeth at in the afflictions of his people, whether by with-holding some desired mercies from them, or making them to feel some sensible smart, is the *exciting of his Peoples Grace.* This is plainly expressed in the beforementioned text, *Hos.* 5. 15. *I will return* (saith God) unto my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and *seek my face.* There are two *gracious exercises* which the Lord by affliction *extiteth.* 1. The first is the *grace of prayer.* This is most properly signified, by the term *seek my face,* (though I know it is a phrase more comprehensive) yet that is most ordinarily expressed by it; this is not only expressed in that text, but in many others. *Is any man afflicted* (saith *James*) *let him pray,* so Psal. 50. 12. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt praise me.* Hence it is an excellent sign that Gods appointed time to shew mercy, either to a people, or to a Soul is come, when the Lord poureth out upon them *the Spirit of grace, and supplication,* he more specially moveth, and inciteth his people to ask, when it is in his heart to give the mercy that they ask of him, and on the other side, the restraining of prayer from God on our part, or the with-holding the Spirit of Prayer (on Gods part) is an ill sign that our mercy is yet afar off. 2. A second *exercise* of grace, the exciting of which God aims at, *is that of faith. Zech.* 13. 9. *They shall say the Lord is my God*; this is now when a Soul for the mercy which it desireth, is brought off all dependances upon the creature, and brought to a sole Eying of, and dependency upon God; and this is true, both as to more publick and national mercies, and also as to more private, and personal mercies. *Israel* were a great way off mercy, when they trusted on the *broken reeds* of *Ægypt* and *Assyria,* instead of helping them, they ran into their hands, and more wounded them, but they were very near mercy when they said, *Hos.* 14. 3. *Assur shall not save us, neither will we ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods, for in thee the Fatherless finds mercy.* Mark what God adderh in the very next words; *I will heal their backslidings,*

dings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away, I will be as the dew unto Israel, *he shall grow as the lilly, and cast forth his roots, as* Lebanon. Hence again it appeareth, that when People, for the mercies they want and would ask of God, are brought off all forreign dependencies, all creature confidence, and brought to a single, sole confidence in God, this is an excellent sign, that the day is dawning upon them, and the time come, which God hath set in his eternal thoughts, wherein he intendeth to shew them favour.

3. A third end which God aimeth at, in, and by our afflictions, is, *the probation and trial of grace, I will melt them, and try them,* Jer. 9. 7. *I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them, as Silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tryed. Faith* and *Patience* are those two graces which are more eminently tryed in an hour of affliction; you have them both mentioned together, *James* 1. 2, 3. *My Brethren count it all joy, when you fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience,* and again; *let patience have its perfect work,* & 1 Pet. 1. 6. *You are in heavineſs through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious, then that of Gold that periſheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praiſe, honour, and glory,* &c. by faith here is meant a reliance, and dependance upon God, notwithstanding our trials, *Job* expresseth it well, *Job* 13. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Hence again, if a Soul findeth that its affliction (be it of what nature it will) hath humbled it to Gods foot, made it quiet, and patient, resolving meekly, and without repining, or murmuring to bear the indignation of God, because he hath laid it upon it, and that it hath brought him to a reliance and dependance upon God, though it doth not see him, this (again) is an excellent sign, that Gods *set time* is come.

2. A second rule to know Gods *set time* by, is this; *When a people, or a particular ſoul is wrought into ſuch a frame, as the promiſe of mercy is made unto. David* saith of God, *Pſal.* 20. 17. *Thou haſt heard the deſire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou will cauſe thine ear to hear.* Mark, first God prepareth the heart, then he causeth his ear to hear; first, he prepareth the hearts of people to receive the mercy, then he gives out the mercy; now how doth God prepare the heart, but by working of it up into such a frame, as he hath promised the mercy upon, and unto?

1. He worketh the heart into a *patient, meek, humble, ſubmiſſive frame*, he heareth the deſire of the humble, as you have it in that text, but of this I have ſpoken but now.

2. *In the mountain of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.* We are then prepared for mercy, when we know not how longer to uphold, and ſubſiſt without it, *Iſaiah* 57. 16. *I will not* (ſaith God) *contend for ever, neither will I be alwaies wroth, for the Spirits would fail before me, and the Souls which I have made*, v. 18. *I have ſeen his ways, and will heal him, and will lead him alſo, and reſtore comforts unto him.* When *Peter* cried out that he *ſank*, then Chriſt lent hhim is hand; when the Soul apprehends itſelf as it were at the laſt gaſp, that is often Gods time, for he will not ſuffer his peoples Spirits to fail, nor the Souls which he hath made.

3. In ſuch diſpenſations of mercy to the People of God, as muſt depend upon the deſtroying or removing of their Enemies; *the exceeding wickedneſs of the enemy, is a good ſign that Gods ſet time is near, for the Salvation of his people from them.* I build this concluſion upon Gods Word to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 16. where God gives this as the reaſon why the ſeed of *Abraham* ſhould not till after four hundred years, take a poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan* ----*for the iniquity of the* Amorites *is not yet full.* The wicked have their day, and their day is with reference to the people of God, the very *power of darkneſs*, but as it is with the darkneſs of the night, they ſay it is darkeſt juſt before the dawning of the day, ſo the darkneſs cauſed to the Church of God, by the wickedneſs of the wicked, when it is at the thickeſt, is a good preſage of approaching light. So as though the day of the greateſt malice, oppreſſion, and wickedneſs of wicked men, be a very ſad day, even the power of darkneſs, yet in this it ſpeaketh well, that the ſalvation of Gods people is nevernearer.

4. Laſtly, *In regard the ſet times of our mercies are hidden from the beſt of Gods people, in caſe they have not a preſent anſwer in kind, they muſt be content if they have it in value.* I pray obſerve this. God anſwereth the prayers of his people more ways then one, ſometimes he anſwereth them by *denying* them, nor is this a way of anſwering to be deſpiſed, for whatſoever the particular thing be, which a reaſonable Soul deſires, its general deſire is *ſome good.* Our reaſonable natures will not ſuffer us to ask any thing which is bad, if we ſo apprehend it, now ſuch is the infirmity of our ſtate, that we in all circumſtances do not know what

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is good for our selves. So that God often in denying a particular desire of our Souls, answereth the general desire of our Souls, we ask what would do us hurt; God denieth it, because he would do us good, and not hurt. In this case if the Lord giveth us an heart content to be without the thing we ask, he abundantly answereth our prayers, and giveth us the general and true desire of our Souls. God sometimes answereth our prayers, by giving us *idem*, the same thing which we ask, but this he never doth, but where he seeth it is for our good, and that under our present circumstances; sometimes he answereth us by giving us *tantundem*, the value of the mercy, though not the particular thing which we ask of God, thus he answered *Paul* as to *the thorn in his flesh*, and this is a real answer, and with this every Child of God ought to be fully satisfied, and contented.

But this is enough to have said to this point, how Christians may know whether *Gods time*, his set time to favour his Church, or the Souls of his people is come, a point of great concern in order to the satisfaction of Christians, why they have not a present answer to their prayers, & to abate their dissatisfaction, as to the inequal motions of *Divine Providence* in this answer of prayers.

3. Lastly, Something is necessary with reference to the *manner of our prayers*, if we would so pray as to receive a present answer. So two things are necessary; 1. That we pray *Believingly*. 2. *Fervently*.

1. *Believingly*. I opened this before, under the first head, and therefore shall say nothing to it here.

2. *Fervently*. That is that which alone I shall here speak to. This is much mistaken, if it be thought to lie in the vehemency of our tone, and expression, it lyeth much deeper in the intension of the mind, and the Souls secret affection to, and in the duty. *James* tells us, ch. 5. v. 16. *The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much.* The word is ἐνεργουμένη which properly signifieth *operative* and *working*, and so working, as it produceth the effect. The Prophet speaking of God, *Isaiah* 41. 4. useth this expression, *who hath wrought, and done it*, the *Septuagint* translate the *Hebrew* word there by this word, the Apostle useth it to express such a working, as that by which *God bringeth about his decrees*, Eph. 1. 11. *Who worketh all things according to the counsel of his will*; and again, he useth it to express the *working of the Devil* in wicked men, whom he calleth *Children of disobedience*,

dience, Eph. 2. 2. In the primitive times, those who were acted by the Devil, were called ἐνεργούμενοι because of the great power, and force, which the evil Spirit put forth upon, and shewed in those miserable creatures that were possessed. *Piscator* upon the Text, *Jam.* 5. 16. translates it *Ardens*, the burning flaming prayer. *Beza* translateth it *Efficax*, the efficacious prayer; δέησις ἐνεργουμένη doubtless signifies *that prayer, which setteth the whole Soul on work.* There is a cold, dead, lazy prayer, where the *tongue* only is set on work, or only the *tongue*, and the *head*, or the *fancy*; the one to invent and compose matter, the other to utter it, but neither of these is that *fervent prayer* which St. *James* speaketh of, but that prayer which setteth the whole Soul in motion towards God, where not only the fancy and imagination, and understanding are imployed to invent and suggest matter, the *will* to will it, but the *affections* (which indeed in a reasonable creature are but the motions of the will towards its object) with the utmost intension to *desire it*, to exercise an hope in God for it, *&c.* this is the *fervent working prayer* mentioned by St. *James*, this prayer doth much with God. *Jacobs prayer* was such a prayer, *Moses* saith he *wrestled with God until the morning*, he said unto God. *I will not let thee go, until thou blessest me*, the Prophet expounds it, *Hosea* 12. 4. *He wept, and made supplications unto him*; by this prayer he *had power over the Angel, and prevailed* (as it is there in the words immediately preceding) yea, and he had a present answer, God blessed him before he parted with him as you read in his History. Such a prayer was *Daniels*, to which he received also a present answer, *Dan.* 9. *v.* 3. I (saith he) set *my face to the Lord God*, to seek by *Prayer and Supplications: with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes*, such was *Elijahs* prayer, 1 *Kings* 18. 42. The text saith. *He put his face betwixt his knees*, a posture signifying the great intension of his mind and spirit. It is a praying with *strong cries and groans which cannot be uttered*, which is the Apostles phrase, *Rom.* 8. 26. This praying comes up to the first, and great commandment. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Soul, and all thy strength.* This is like the drawing the arrow to the head, which sendeth it with more force to the mark; nor indeed is there a better sign of a sudden answer, than when the Lord hath thus prepared the heart. A man seldom finds his Soul more then ordinarily fervent, and importunate with God for a mercy, but when the Lord hath

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determined suddenly to give it in to him. Thus now I have shewed you in what cases God ordinarily gives in speedy answers to his peoples prayer. But God doth not do this alwaies. *David* himself complaineth, *Psal.* 22. 2. *O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.* The Church crieth out, *Psal.* 80. 4. *O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou be angry with the prayers of thy people?* And again, *he shutteth out my prayer, Lam.* 3. 8. What should be the reason of these inequal dispensations from the hand of the same God, and gracious Father? I answer;

1, Why may not God do it, *that we may not track him in his ways?* He will be known to be a free agent. He will sometimes give present answer, that his people may be confirmed in their faith, that God is a God hearing prayer. The God, *that never said to the seed of* Jacob, *seek my face in vain*; he will not alwaies give a present answer, that we may not ascribe too much unto prayer, nor will he alwaies delay, that we may not ascribe too little to it. If God should alwaies give a present answer, we should ascribe too much to prayer, and make an idol of a duty. That the Lord might secure his own glory, and be owned as the God of our mercies, the object of our faith, and dependence, the free fountain of all our good things, God is pleased, sometimes sooner, sometimes later, to give in answer to his peoples prayer.

2. But there may be reason enough for it, fetched *from the prayers themselves.* One prayer may be made more in faith than another, more fervent than another, more fitted to Gods set time, for the bestowing of a mercy than another; it is true nothing of these can render the prayer more meritorious, our prayers, take them at the best, are too poor things to be the price of the least mercies, when we have done all that we can, we are unprofitable servants; but where one prayer is more conformable to the will of God than another, it may move God further, and may obtain a more speedy answer from Gods hand.

3. Finally there may be some reason given *on the account of the parties praying.* Some of Gods *people may be greater favourites with God then others*; God loves all his Saints with an equal *elective*, and *redeeming* love, but there may be differences as to the manifestations of his love. *Samuel*, and *Moses*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Job* are mentioned by the Prophets, as Persons that had a

mighty power with God above others. God therefore in the expression of his anger against *Israel* saith, if they stood before him, they should only save their own Souls. God sent *Abimelech* to *Abraham*, and *Jobs* Friends to *Job*, to pray for them, assuring them that those he would accept. God had a *David* whom he calls the man according to Gods own heart, and Christ had a *John*, who was called the *beloved Disciple*, all the Disciples were beloved, but he was loved with a more special, signal love, this the Disciples knew, and therefore when he had told them, that one of them should betray him, *Simon Peter* beckned to *John*, that he *should ask him of whom he spake*. Now it is no wonder if the prayer of him who is *highly beloved* in some singular degree of favour with God, should receive a quicker answer then anothers, this is but after the manner of men. 2. *The state of Gods people, may be such as will admit of no delay*. If the Lord doth not come in with some present help, they must be lost and undone, their Spirits must fail, and the Souls which he hath made; now in such cases as these, it is no wonder if the Lord gratifies his people with quicker answers, and returns to their prayers; but who is he that can pretend to give a reason of Gods differing dispensations of his grace? all that we can do in this case, is but to shew you that the ways of the Lord are reasonable, though the reason of them be a depth past our finding out. We should not sufficiently adore, and admire God, if we did perfectly understand him; but I shall add no more doctrinally to this discourse, much of which, though it may look like something of a digression, yet I hope it will not be altogether unprofitable.

Use 1. This notion *wonderfully commendeth the love of God to the Sons, and Daughters of Men*. There is not any one *name of God*, that more commendeth the love of God to us, or which we have more reason to glory in then, that *he is a God that heareth prayers*. It is true God needeth not our tongues, to tell him what we have need of, he knoweth what things we need before we ask him, nor do our prayers merit any favour. It is the goodness, the free goodness of God that relieveth us in any streight, in any distress, but you know it is very natural to us, when we are in any misery, in any distress, or streight, to *cry for help*, and a wonderful relief to our thoughts, to know that our sighs, and cries, and groans are not lost in the air; Oh! 'tis a sad, and uncom-

comfortable thing to *cry*, and to have none to help, none to deliver. What a comfortable thing it is to *cry in hope*, nay, *in confidence, for we have this confidence* (saith the Apostle) *that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.* Now that the great and mighty God, who needeth not our supplications, should lend an ear to them, and give us an assurance of his hearing, and answering them; what a mighty thing is this to set up God high in our thoughts, for the Majesty of Heaven to stoop to the worms of the Earth, when they but turn up their heads to him? What a condescension is this? what an humbling of the Divine Majesty? what a relief to poor creatures infirmities, to know, that not a sigh, not a groan, not a prayer shall be lost? But this is yet something beyond this; That the Lord should oft-times give a present answer, and prevent our impatience by an answer so swift, as gives our Eyes no leave to fail through a frustrated expectation; this is yet a great deal more. In receiving our petitions, and promising us an answer, God shews himself a gracious *King*, though we wait some time for an answer, but in his present answers he shews himself a *gracious Father*, that is not patient that his Child should be one hour in distress and misery. Nor is the love of our Heavenly Father alone commended in this particular, but the love of Jesus Christ also is remarkably commended, for it is through him that *we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and he is the High Priest over the House of God.* O let every quick return of prayers which God makes to our Souls, bring us more in love with Christ, more into the admiration of his love, and raise up our hearts more in *thankfulness*, for the death, resurrection and intercession of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, *How should this incourage us to prayer, and to such a performance of that duty, as we may have a quick return, and answer.* Prayer is not so slighty a duty, as the most of people do make it, it ought not to be made such a formal performance. It is one of our great priviledges to have an access, a freedom of access to the Throne of Grace, to ask of God such things as we stand in need of; it is that which bringeth down the Protection, and influences of common providence, and the influences of his special grace, it openeth, and shutteth up Heaven. By prayer *Elijah* brought down *rain* and *fire* from Heaven; *Samuels Prayer* Use 2.

brought thunder, and lightning. *Hezekiahs* prayer brought down an *Angel*, that destroyed the Host of *Sennacherib*, it obtained a blessing for *Jacob*, and turned his name into the name of *Israel*, because as a Prince he had power, and prevailed with God; nay, it often brings down the mercy we want in a very short time, while the Child of God is speaking, God answereth, here am I. This should make us value the duty of *prayer*, and not to think it a mere thing of course, and turn it into a formality. And what you have heard concerning the nature of that prayer, which is of such power and prevalency with God, should also mind you to take heed *how you pray*. Prayer doth not lie in a meer uttering, or repeating of words expressive of our minds unto God, men may call this *prayer*, but they will find it a bodily labour of a little efficacy, and avail with God; it is true, you will hardly find any thing called *Prayer* in Scripture, where *words* were not used, it seemeth to be something more then the secret desire of the Soul; the desires of our Souls, expressed by the words of our lips, is what is generally called *prayer*, in holy writ, but words without inward affections, words not thrust out from the force of our internal desires and affections, are the least thing in prayer, which lieth not in the pouring forth of words, but in the pourings out of our Souls before God. Labour Christians to understand the nature of *prayer*, both as to the matter you should pray for, and as to the right manner of the performance of it, you all know what you would have, what you have need of, what is truly good for you under your present circumstances, this you know not; some things are absolutely good, universally necessary, such things as all Souls at all times have need of, such are *pardon of sins, sanctification, further grace to honour and glorify God in your circumstances*, and relations, an heart to honour and glorify God in whatsoever state and condition you are; these and such like things you may beg *importunately*, and *absolutely*, and that at all times. But there are other things which are not so absolutely and universally good, but are good or evil, as they are well used, or abused. These must be asked of God, with a submission to his will, and a reference to his wisdom. It is of mighty concern for a Christian rightly to understand the matter of prayer, what he may, or may not ask of God, what he may ask absolutely, what but conditionally, and with limitation; an ignorance of this may make Christians too bold, too imper-

portunate with God in asking some things, and to sin by impatience, and murmuring, because they do not receive presently what they ask, when as the reason is, because they ask amiss. *James* tells those to whom he wrote, *Jam.* 4 3. *You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss*; he instanceth but in one way wherein they asked amiss, *that you might consume it upon your lusts.* That indeed is one way by which men may miscarry in prayer, not directing their prayer to the honour and glory of God, but meerly to a *self-satisfaction*, and indeed taking the words in that sense, as *spending upon their lusts* signifies a gratifying our selves, and giving our selves a pleasure and satisfaction; so all *asking amiss*, will fall under it, and such asking amiss is the cause of all our not receiving; no man can ask any thing for the honour and glory of God, who doth not ask according to the will of God, God is glorified by the fulfilling of his will, and whosoever prays, and the sum of his prayer is not, *let the Lord be glorified, let the will of the Lord be done*, doth but ask that he may consume upon his lust, and give himself a satisfaction; now all this is *asking amiss*, which is the cause of our *not receiving*. It is therefore I say of a very great concernment for a Christian to know *what he may pray for*, what he may pray for absolutely, and peremptorily, what but limitedly, and conditionally, with submission to the Divine will, and with a reference to the Divine wisdom, how else is it possible, that he *should pray in faith*? or how else will he be able to command his Spirit into a due silence, and patience, if he doth not presently receive what he asketh of God? Nay, the fervency of a Soul in prayer doth much depend upon this knowledge; no prayer can be fervent, but the prayer of faith. No prayer receiveth a present answer, but the prayer of faith. Study therefore (Christian?) the *due matter*, and *manner of prayer*. There may be many prayers put up, and yet God not hear, *Isa.* 1. 15. *Though* (saith God) *you spread forth your hands, I will hide my Eyes from you, yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear*, the reason there assigned is, *because their hands were full of blood*, which amounts to that of *David*, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my Prayer*, and to that of *Solomon*, *The Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight*. He that lifteth up hands unto *God*, must lift up *pure hands*. But a man may lift up *pure hands*, yet not be heard, *David* complaineth that he did

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so, *Psal.* 22. therefore the Apostle adds, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *Holy hands without wrath or doubting*, for saith *James*, ch. 1. v. 7. *Let not him that wavereth, think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.* Now it is impossible that a man should pray *without doubting*, for any thing of which he is not fully perswaded that it is the *will of God that he should receive it*, this therefore is of very great concern, that a Soul should know that he asks according to the *will of God*, and that must be when he knows that God hath somewhere in Scripture promised it. Be not therefore only much in prayer, but see that you do not ask amiss, that you ask so, that you may receive, yea, that while you are speaking, God may give you a gracious answer.

Use 3. Thirdly. *This Doctrine calls to you for an holy, and close walking with God.* A loose liver may receive some good things from God, as he is a *God of compassion*, full of *pity*, and *tender compassion*, that hears even the *young Ravens* when they cry unto him for their food, thus did *Ahab*, thus did the King of *Nineveth*, and this was a ground for *Simon Magus* to pray, though he was in the gall of bitterness, and the bonds of iniquity; but he can receive nothing from God, as he is a *God of truth and faithfulness*, there is not in all the Book of God, one promise made to a wicked mans prayer. God hath said, *though they make many prayers, he will not hear them*, Isaiah 1. 15. he hath said, *They shall call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me*, *Prov.* 1. 28. For Hypocrites he hath said, *Job* 27. 9. *Will God hear his cry, when trouble comes upon him?* but a *close walking with God* is not only commendable to us upon this account, that our prayers may not be wholly shut out from God, that we may not only in our distresses go to God as a fountain of mercy, and goodness, as a God of pity, and tender compassion, but as unto a God of truth and faithfulness, with an hope, and a confidence in him, and an expectation upon him, and with an holy boldness: but also that we may *have a present answer*, we are naturally hasty as to the *supply of our wants.* and the satisfaction of our desires, hence we say, *Bis dat qui cito dat*, and count that kindness double, which is done for us quickly. Now they are the favourites of Heaven, that gain the quickest answers from God. There's nothing makes one Soul more the favourite of God then another, but a more ardent love for God, and a more strict, and close walking with God. Let this ingage us to *perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.* Study therefore the closest de-

degrees of fellowship, and communion with God, the strictest course of an holy conversation. There is a great deal of difference even in good mens communion with God, some are more upon the mount with God then others are, more in holy meditation and contemplation, more in secret duties, more in prayer, more in watchfulness, more warm, and zealous for God, *David* had many *worthies*, but he had a *first three*, to which the others did not come up, though they did worthily. God hath many Souls, that he loveth, that are dear and precious in his Eyes, but he hath also his *first threes*, some that excel, and outrun others; these are they that have most of Gods Ear, for tho the first grace be not given, because men keep his Commandments, yet *further grace*, the manifestations, and signal tokens of Divine love are given out (according to the promise, *Jo.* 14. 21.) as men love, and keep the Commandments of God; you therefore that would excel in the favour of God, that would have Gods ear fully and presently open to your supplications, study to excel in holiness. Doth a poor Courtier in the Courts of Earthly Princes, bless himself in having the Ear of his Prince, that if he hath a Petition to put up unto his Prince, he can go immediately into his presence, and have his Petition presently signed, whereas the Petitions of others are rejected, or at least deferred, so as he is constrained to wait months or years? And is this no priviledge, no happiness at all, that a poor Soul can immediately go unto the Lord of Heaven and Earth, to him who is the Fountain of all grace and goodness, and if he wants any thing, freely present his Petition to him, and have it signed presently, not let the Lord go, until he hath blessed him, when as a wicked man, tho he maketh many prayers, yet is not heard; yea, those that may have some interest in God, yet walking more loosely, and more imperfectly, may cry a long time, and yet not be answered, if we had nothing more then this to commend to us holiness in all manner of conversation, and the strictest degrees of walking with God, yet this certainly should be enough.

I shall add but one word more in application of this discourse. I put into the Proposition, the term [sometimes] God doth not alwaies, but sometimes give in a quick answer to his peoples prayers; *Let not the people of God therefore think it strange if they have not presently an answer to their prayers.* God is not alwaies alike quick in his returns to the prayers of his people. Use 4.

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He always heareth them, he will be certain to answer them, but he is not alwaies equally quick in the answer of them. This is many times the trouble of Souls that belong to God; it was *Davids* trouble, expressed, *Psal.* 22. 2, 3. It was *Asaphs* trouble, though God did at last hear him, as you read, *v.* 1. yet he had first spake, as in *v.* 7. 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore?* Hath God forgotten to be gracious; *hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies*, yet because the not hearing of prayers is threatned as a judgment, and punishment upon wicked men, and mentioned in holy writ, as the reward of mens *regarding iniquity in their hearts.* This often causeth a great deal of trouble in the Spirits of Gods People. Let me therefore shut up this discourse in advising alittle, what that man or woman should do, that lieth at least under some apprehensions, that God doth not *hear*, or hath not heard their prayers, *they cry in the day time*, and are not *silent in the night season*, yet God *heareth not.*

1. In the first place. Let such a Christian examine *whether it be not his own mistake.* Thou thinkest God hath not heard, nor answered thy prayers, art thou not in a mistake? All answers of prayers are not discernable to our sense. It may be God hath answered thee by *denying thee* the particular thing that thou askedst of him; thus he answered *Paul*, by denying him as to the thing he asked, which was the taking the thorn out of his flesh. He better knoweth what we have need of, then we our selves know it, the general desire of thy Soul was *for some good*, thou didst therefore desire health, riches, *&c.* because thou didst apprehend them suitable, and convenient, and so good for thee. God who knoweth thy Soul, the frame and temper of it, he seeth, that these things would be for thy hurt, he therefore with-holdeth them, and so in not answering answereth thee; in not answering thy particular request, he doth answer the general desire of thy Soul, and only correcteth thy ignorance in thy request. 2. You have heard that God sometimes answereth by giving (though not the thing) yet the value of the thing which thou askest, *i. e.* that which is every way as sutable and convenient, and as profitable for thee, as that which thou didst desire. Hath not God (according to thy prayer) removed thy affliction? yet, hath he supported thee under it? hath he filled thee with inward

ward consolations? hath he told thee (as he did *Paul*) that his *grace should be sufficient for thee*? Dost thou call this no answer? God answers the prayer of that Soul, to whom he giveth the full value of the thing it asketh, though he doth not give the thing itself.

2. If thou canst not find that God hath answered thee, neither in kind, nor in value, *Review thy prayer, and see if thou canst not find some failure in that, for which God with-holds his answer.* I suppose thee a person reconciled to God through the blood of Christ; other Souls either pray not at all, or if at all, they make a meer formality of the duty, and put up prayers, as Children shoot arrows, never regarding whither they flie, or what becometh of them, but even in a good mans prayer there may be such failures as may give God a just cause to with-hold an answer, without any breach of Gods truth, or faithfulness, thou mayest not have prayed in faith, but too much doubting, thou mayest have prayed for something, which thy wise Father saw was not good for thee, or at least not good for thee under some present circumstances, under which thou art; if thou findest any thing of this nature, thy work is to correct thy prayers, if thou wouldst receive an answer.

3. If thou dost not find this, if thou canst not charge thy want of an answer upon some defect or failure in thy prayers, nor yet find that God hath answered thee, either giving thee the thing which thou didst ask of him, or the value of it in a quiet and contented frame of Spirit in the want of it, or in the supportations, or consolations of his Spirit, but thy Soul is yet *unquiet* and *impatient*; *it is thy duty yet to wait upon God*, to chide down thy tumultuous, and unquiet thoughts, all the risings up, and murmurings of thy Soul against God, to adore, and to admire God where thou canst not see, or understand him, to acknowledge Gods goodness and holiness, though thou canst not discern his goodness as to thee in this particular. Thus did *David*, *Psal.* 22. 3. after he had complained, *that he had cried in the day time, and the Lord did not hear, and in the night season*, and was not silent. *v.* 3. he saith, *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of* Israel. This is most certainly our duty under such providences as these are; we must not look in this life to understand all Gods ways, and methods of providence, much less the reasons of them, that is a piece of knowledge reserved

for another world; all that we have to do, is to observe, and study them, and where we cannot find them out, to admire and adore them, and to *wait upon him*, that wrappeth up himself *in thick darkness, and hideth his face from the House of* Jacob. This *waiting* doth not only signify a passive quietness, silence, and patience, but an *active* doing our duty. *Waiting on the Lord, and keeping his way*, are put together, *Psal.* 37. we ought not to leave off praying, because (in our apprehensions at least) our prayers lie by without answer, much less to slacken our course of holiness, but to resolve as the Church did for *Zions sake*, so for our own sake, not to *hold our peace*; we have for this an excellent president in the example of the Church, *Psal.* 44. 17. *All this is come upon us* (saith she) *yet have we not forgotten thee, nor dealt falsely in thy Covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way, though thou hast sore broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death?* then she concludeth with prayer. *v.* 23, 24, 25, 26. *Awake, why sleepest thou?* O Lord! *arise, cast us not off for ever, wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction, and oppression? For our Soul is bowed down to the dust, our belly cleaveth to the Earth. Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercy sake.*

Sermon XXV.

Cant. 1. 4.

The King hath brought me into his Chambers.

IF any asketh *who is this King* whom the text speaks of; as the question soundeth like that, *Psal.* 24. *v.* 8. *Who is the King of glory?* So the answer must be much the same; *The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in Battel, the Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.* He is the *King of Nations*, for all the Nations of the Earth are the work of his hands, and he hath a Native Lordship and dominion over them. He is the *King upon the holy hill of Sion*, the *King of Saints*, they have chosen him, he ruleth in them, and reigneth over them, they have chosen him, he

he hath subdued their hearts unto him, and hath chosen them for his peculiar people; this is the *King* of whom the Church, and the believing Soul here speaketh, and saith; *The King hath brought me into his Chambers.* It is the same Person of whom she spake, *v.* 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.* To whom she said, *v.* 3. *Draw me, and we will run after thee.* There she spake to him, as her *beloved*, here she speaketh of him as a *King*; there she prayed for something that she wanted, here she *praiseth*, and giveth thanks for something she had received. I have already taken notice of the alteration of her stile, of her so sudden giving thanks upon the quick return God had made to her prayers. I come now to consider the mercy or good thing she had received, which she expresseth in the same metaphorical dialect, which she useth throughout this Song. *The King hath brought me into his Chambers*; when I at first opened the whole verse, I endeavoured to find out what this *mercy* was, in the receit of which the Spouse triumpheth in this text. I then considered *Chambers*, as places more *lofty* then others, and and of more *privacy* and *secrecy*, and from thence concluded; that the Spouse by this phrase signifieth some *special favours* which she had received from *God*, some special, and more near and intimate degrees of *fellowship*, and *communion* with God, into which her *beloved* had taken her. The *Proposition* I offered from the words for my further explication was this:

That the Lord Jesus Christ hath Chambers, in which he sometimes entertaineth the Souls of his people. He hath a favour for them all, Rooms in his House for all the sizes of his people, but he hath Chambers for some, or into which he sometimes takes up the Souls of his Saints; the subject of my discourse will be such special favours, as God sheweth to some Souls, or to the Souls of his people at some times. This is evident in holy writ. *Abraham* was called the *Friend of God*. *Moses* is called his *Servant*, emphatically. *Moses my Servant is dead*. *David*, the man according to Gods own heart. *Solomon* was named by God *Jedidiah*, a man beloved of God. There are four degrees in the love of God, as it respecteth the Children of men. Prop.

1. He hath a *Philanthropy*, or general love, which he sheweth towards all; *He leaveth not the Heathen without witness.* In him all men *live, move, and have their being*, from him they have fruitful times and seasons, which fill their bellies with food, their

hearts with gladness, their bellies are *filled with his hid treasure. The patience of God leadeth them to repentance.* The invisible things of God, even his eternal *power* and *God-head* are made known to them, by his *works of Creation*, by the things which he hath made.

2. He *hath a more special love for his Church.* This is seen in his more *special providence*, exercised towards his whole Church, which are more watched over, and preserved by a common providence, then any other body of people are. They have also the *Oracles of God*, the *Ordinances of God*, and *means of grace*, and this latter is certainly an effect of the death of Christ.

3. He hath yet a more *special love for all those within his Church*, who are effectually called, whose hearts God hath seized, and subdued to himself, they are made partakers of more *special grace*, being called, justified, and sanctified, and such who shall hereafter be most certainly glorified.

4. But there is yet another specialty of Divine love, even amongst those who are made *partakers of special saving graces*, some are more specially favoured in this life, and shall be more eminently then others glorified, in that life which is to come. These more special favours to the Saints, that are all made partakers of the same saving grace, are the subject of my present enquiry.

1. Some here understand the *mansions of glory*, but they are forced to make an *Enallage* of tenses to justify their interpretation, & to say, *the King hath*, is put for *the King shall bring me*, &c. *Aquinas*, *Piscator*, and some others thus interpret the Spouse. The question about degrees of glory, is not well agreed amongst Divines, there are great Divines on either side as to that opinion; nor is it a small difficulty to open in what the glory of one Child of God, when he comes in Heaven, shall excell anothers. When it is certain, that they shall all *see God, inherit his Kingdom, be satisfied with his likeness, and there shall be no want to any Soul there*, especially we being taught by our Saviour, that every labourer in the Vineyard shall *have his penny*. But yet it is very probably judged by Divines, That in that firmament, as well as in that which is lower, the stars shall differ one from another in glory, and that when Christ told his Disciples, they should sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, he by it expressed some greater degrees of glory, then

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shall be the portion of his more common Disciples besides, that the Scriptures speaking of God's rewarding all men according to their works, compared with the disproportion which we see in the works of Believers, make it yet more probable: So that I must confess my self very inclinable in this point, to be of the mind of those Divines who think that in the *Mansions of Glory*, there shall be *Chambers*, though I am not able to distinguish them from the *lower Rooms* in those blessed *Mansions*. But yet I am not inclinable (supposing this) to interpret the Spouse as speaking of them here, but rather judge her by this phrase designing to express her felicity, not discerned by the Eye of Faith, which is the Evidence of things not seen, but by the *Eye of Sense*, some special favour now received from God; and I am therefore concerned further to enquire, what these favours may be.

2. *God hath Chambers of special Providence.* Some indeed understand that Text, *Isa.* 26. 20. *Come my people enter into the Chambers, and hide thy self*; concerning the *Grave*, because *the righteous are taken away* (as the Prophet saith) *from the Evil to come*: But others (and I think better) interpret it as an invitation of God to his people in calamitous times to betake themselves into the Chambers of his *special providence*, the *Psalmist* saith, *Psal.* 91. 1. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of his Wings.* In this Chamber there are Closets, there is a special providence that attendeth, and watcheth over the whole Church, as the whole Nation of the Jews were under more special providences, than the Heathens, but yet there is a more special providence attends the people of God who are so indeed. Which is abundantly proved throughout the 91 Psalm, so *Psal.* 34. 18. *The Eye of the Lord is upon those that fear him, and upon those that hope in his mercy: To deliver their Souls from death, and to keep them alive in Famine.* But in regard the Spouse here speaketh not of herself, as under any circumstances of *outward misery or affliction*; I do not think this is her meaning in this Text, these are not the Chambers, concerning which the Spouse boasteth, that the King had brought her into them, she is speaking here doubtless of more spiritual inward dispensations.

3. *God hath his Chamber of Audience*, where he receiveth, heareth, and giveth answer to the prayers of his people. This

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is a near degree of the Souls communion with God, and what God hath promised them, *Psal.* 34. 15. *The Eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his Ears are open unto their cry.* And again, *v.* 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* This is a favour which the Lord affordeth every believer, the promises of hearing prayers belong to them all; but yet in this Chamber there are Closets also, God sometimes granteth a more speedy answer to his peoples prayers, sometimes he delayeth, and seemeth to be angry with, and to shut out his peoples supplications from him; but you know it was my whole business in my last discourse to prove, and to give you some account of this, which may very well supersede any larger discourse upon it, under this *Proposition. Abraham, Moses,* and *Daniel,* and *Job,* were all entertained in these Chambers, so are many of the Servants of God at this day, men mighty with God in prayer, such Favourites in the Court of Heaven, that they have no more to do then to form their Petitions, and to put them into the hands of Christ, and to get upon their Watch-Tower with *Habakkuk,* and see what the Lord will answer. God seemeth to have said unto them, as *Ahasuerus* said to *Esther*; *What is thy Petition* (O my Child) *and what is thy request? it shall be performed, even to the half of my Kingdom. Solomon* was entertained by God in this Chamber, when the Lord appeared unto him in *Gibeon,* and asked him, *what shall I give thee?* and when after his prayer upon the dedication of his Temple, the Lord again appeared to him, and said? *I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place for my self*: a Soul may be said to be brought into this Chamber, either when it findeth that God hath answered its prayers at any time; Or, 2. When, it before it prays, ordinarily findeth a perswasion within itself, that it shall be answered, and so goeth with boldness, and confidence to the throne of grace, and poureth out its self unto God without doubting.

4. God hath *Chambers,* which I may call *the Chambers of his special presence.* This being the thing which I conceive chiefly intended in this metaphorical expression, I shall spend a little time in the explication of it. The Scripture speaking much of Gods *presence* with, and absence from his people, his being *with them,* or forsaking them, and *departure* from them; that you may in some measure understand those phrases, Consider,

1. *There*

1. *There is a presence of the Divine Essence*, in all places, in respect of which it is said, *The Lord filleth Heaven and Earth.* In respect of this *he is never far from any of us*, he is neither shut up in, nor shut out of any place, nor is he more present in one place, then he is in another, according to that barbarous verse. *Enter, praesenter, Deus est & ubique potenter.* God is every where in respect of his *being, essential presence, and power.*

2. There is a presence of the *Divine goodness*; *it's communicative goodness*, for there is an *essential goodness* which can never be separated from it, wherever the *divine being is*, there is *infinite goodness*; but there is in God not only a *goodness of perfection*, which is essential to God, and inseparable from him, but a *goodness of bounty and beneficence*, which is nothing else but the goodness of God affecting the creature, and flowing out upon the creature; now this *dependeth upon the will of God.* He sheweth *mercy where he will shew mercy.* Thus God is said to be present, *where he sheweth mercy and kindness*, and to be *absent* where *he with-holdeth his acts of kindness.* Thus the Saints in Heaven are said to be ever *with the Lord* in Heaven, because they shall be ever under the fullest manifestations of his glory and goodness, and the damned are said to *depart from God*, because they are never like more to see him, or feel him in any manifestations of his mercy and goodness, the shewing of mercy and goodness is so natural to God, so much his proper work and delight, that he is said to be *wholly absent* from them, to whom he will never more shew kindness and mercy. So as to this life, God is said to be *present* with a people, when he sheweth them goodness, and mercy, to be departed, and to be absent from them, when he with-holdeth from them such dispensations, as they have formerly enjoyed, and are suited and proper to their wants, or desires. Now these mercies, or good things being such as are suited to the necessities of our bodies here in this life, or of our Souls, the first of which we usually call the good things of *common providence.* The latter, the good things of *special grace.* God is said to be present with, or absent from his people, with respect to the one, or to the other; with respect to the good things *of common providence*, God is present with a people, when he goeth forth with their Armies, gives them peace, and plenty, success in business, prosperity in their tradings and commerce; and on the other

other side, he is said to be *absent* from them, and to be *departed* from them, when he goeth not forth with their Armies, but makes them to fall before their enemies, when he sends amongst them famine, and pestilence, *&c.* Thus as to particular persons, as God is said to be present with persons, when he upholdeth their Souls in life, their bodies in health, when he blesseth them in their businesses, and relations, and maketh the works of their hands to prosper; so he is said to have forsaken them, and to be *departed from them*, when he leaves them to sicknesses, blasts them in their Estates, *&c.* thus Gods presence, and being with his people, his absence, forsaking of, and departing from a people, or person, are often taken in holy writ. Thus God may be present with the very worst of men, thus he may be absent, and depart from the very best of his people.

But then there is a presence of God with men and women, *with respect to the good things of special grace.* Now these things again are such as are either *absolutely necessary to salvation*; Or, 2. Such *influences*, as though they be not *absolutely necessary* to the *salvation of the Soul*, yet do *highly accommodate the Soul in its way to Heaven.* Of the first sort are the *graces of justification*, and of *Regeneration*, & *Sanctification*; without these the Soul can never enter into the Kingdom, as to these therefore God is always present with, never absent from the Souls of any whom he hath chosen, and called out of darkness into light; in that sense the promise doth, and ever shall hold true; *He will never leave his people, nor forsake them.* But now there are other influences of grace, exceeding pleasant, & of high advantage, & accommodation to the Soul in its way to Heaven, such are further *degrees of strength, and ability*, further *freedom, life*, and *activity*, and chearfulness in the service of God, *peace of conscience*, and *joy in the Holy Ghost*, these are not absolutely necessary unto eternal life, and salvation, nor to the upholding of spiritual life in the Soul, the want of them is only *afflictive* to the Soul, and incumbers it in its spiritual life, without a total destruction of it; as to these, God giveth more or less to the Souls of his people, and to the same Souls, more or less at one time then at another, and so is said to be *present*, or *absent from them*, according to the greater or lesser degrees of these influences which he vouchsafeth unto them, and those Souls may be said to be brought into the *Lords Chambers*, to whom he vouchsafeth *greater degrees of these gracious*

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influences, and those Souls may be said to be under *desertions*, forsaken of God, to whom the Lord denieth such degrees of these influences, as either themselves have before enjoyed, or others do enjoy. As to these God is very various in his dispensations, they being such dispensations, as God upon the covenant of grace is left at liberty to dispense out to the Souls of his people, or to with-hold from them according to his own good pleasure, and wisdom, and which accordingly he doth dispense out in pursute of the design of his own glory, and as according to his infinite knowledge and wisdom, he seeth will be most for the good of his people; when God dispenseth out more of these, he is said to be more present with the Souls of his people, when he more with-holdeth them, he is said to be absent, not that at any time he is wholly absent from the Souls of his people, as to his gracious presence (for without that they were able to do nothing) the *seed* of God *abiding* in the Soul, must be upheld in its life, and cherished by the influence of the Sun of righteousness upon the Soul; but as God, though he be alwaies present in the world, by his *essential presence*, yet doth not alwaies shew forth his power in upholding, and preserving this or that part of it, no not the same parts of it, which is the reason of that sickness and mortality, with which some parts of it are affected more than others, and the same parts of it are affected at some times more than others. So as to spiritual influences, though he alwaies vouchsafeth such a presence of his gracious influences, as shall keep up spiritual life in the Soul, yet for further gradual influences (the want of which is yet consistent with spiritual life in the Soul) the Lord granteth, or with holdeth them, according to his own will, guided by his infinite wisdom, with respect to the great ends of his own glory, and his peoples good. And the Lords withdrawings of this nature, are the cause of all the Souls sickness, and spiritual distempers, upon this are the grievous complaints of the people of God, of the strength of their corruptions, the violence of temptations, their deadness, and inactivity to, & in the operations of the spiritual life, their heaviness, sadness, and want of comfort. When the Lord granteth out to any of the Souls of his people more of these influences, then he may be said to bring them into his *Chambers*; when they find more *internal strength* to the performance of their duties, that their meditation of God is more

sweet to them, they can *believe* with less doubting, pray with more faith, more fervour, less distraction, when they find more strength against motions to sin, more ability and courage to suffer for the name of God, when they find their Souls more ready to, more free, and chearful in their duty, when they find more serenity, peace, and comfort within, than they have formerly experienced, then may the Lord be said to have brought them into his *Chambers*, the Chambers of his *presence*, when these abate, and the Soul lives, and no more but lives, complaining that it is without strength, ready to be overthrown by every motion of lust, by every forreign temptation, that the thoughts of God are troublesome to it, it may be terrible that it moves heavily, it doth something of its duty, but it is rather its task, and burthen, than its pleasure and delight, its heart is sad, and heavy, and dejected, in such cases as these. Now God is present with the Soul that is his, for he dwelleth in it, but he entertaineth it as it were in his low Rooms. *Cubiculum* (saith *Bernard* upon the Text) *est locus ubi vere quiescens & quietus Deus cernitur.* The Chamber is a place where the Soul seeth God, quiet, and at rest. Sometimes the Soul apprehendeth God as it were *returned to his place* (to speak in the Prophets Dialect) as it were risen up from the Soul, and returned to Heaven, only to be found there, by *fasting*, and *weeping*, and *earnest seeking after him*; it apprehends God as *angry*, and not at rest in it; sometimes it discerns him at *rest* in it, the Soul can say, *Lo this is my God, I have waited for him, I have waited for him, I will rejoice, and be glad in his Salvation*, then the Soul returneth unto *its rest*, *Psal.* 116. 7. *Return unto thy rest O my Soul* (saith *David*) *for the Lord hath dealt graciously with thee.* When God is at rest in the Soul, then is the Soul at rest within itself, then hath the King brought the Soul into his Chambers. *David* when he was under apprehensions that the Lord sustained him, resolves to lay himself down in *peace*, and *sleep*, *Psal.* 4. 7. God had dealt graciously with him. These now are the *Kings Chambers*, and what I conceive to be here chiefly intended.

5. *Gregory* hath another notion of these Chambers. *What* (saith he) *should we understand by these Chambers but the mysteries of holy contemplations?* The *Astronomer* indeed, that spends his time in the contemplation of the Stars, chuseth the roof of the House, or some lofty room, for his contemplation, and we all chuse

chuse the highest places of the House, for our prospects of things afar off, and all contemplative Persons chuse Chambers, as places of privacy for their contemplations. *When the Lord raiseth the Soul to further degrees of spiritual-mindedness*, and gives the Soul a power further to contemplate him in his Divine Nature and goodness, then he may be said to have brought the Soul into his *Chambers*. There is a time *when the Soul remembreth God, and is troubled* (thus it was with the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 77. 3.) Another time *when the meditation of God is sweet* to the Soul (so it was with *David*, *Psal.* 104. 34.) when the Soul is able to meditate of God without distractions, or disturbance, and can sit alone, and fancy that it seeth even the Heavens open, and beholdeth the glory of God, and its Redeemers arms open to receive it; and there is another time, when it is not able to lift up an Eye to God, nor to behold him with any pleasing aspect. When the Soul is in the former state, then the King may be said to have brought the Soul into his Chambers, but this the observing person will see fell under the aforementioned consideration.

Lastly, There are yet some other Chambers, into which God sometimes brings the Souls of his people, in the description of which I will not enlarge, because they are more peculiar *Closets* into which God hath taken, and may (for ought I know) yet take the Souls of some particular Servants of his, into which believers in general cannot expect to be brought, they being such as God in all times hath been pleased, but to take some few of his people into, and generally such, as he hath designed to make some more publick use of in the world; I may call them *Chambers of particular instruction*. Before God had fully revealed his will in the holy Scriptures, written for our instruction, and consolation. God was pleased at *sundry times, and in divers manners* (as the *Apostle* speaketh, *Heb.* 1. 1.) *to speak unto the Fathers by the Prophets*. Persons whom God admitted to a more special degree of fellowship, and communion with him, and sometimes more plainly, sometimes more *typically*, and darkly to instruct them concerning his mind and will, both concerning what they were to do, and to avoid, and concerning what God intended to do in the world, or some particular place in it; into these Chambers he took *Abraham*, when he did not hide from him what he intended to do to *Sodom*, and *Moses*, when he took him up into

the *Mount*, and there gave him his law, instructing him in his mind and will, that he might instruct the people under his charge, in these Chambers the Lord entertained *Samuel*, *Elijah*, *Elisha*, *Gad*, and *Nathan*, and all the *Seers*, and Prophets of whom you read in the Old *Testament*, and after them the blessed *Apostles*, and some primitive Christians. But the bringing of any Souls now into these Chambers, is no matter of our faith, and expectation; though we must not *limit the holy one of Israel*, nor hath (that we know) he any where as to this limited himself; indeed as to one part of the revelation he hath: None can expect, nor have any *new revelation of duty*, for the holy Scriptures are a perfect rule, and able to make the man of God wise to Salvation. But we may have a fuller *revelation of what is revealed*, and thus doubtless, there is a further discovery of duty in this, than in former ages, no *new light* of truth, but a new light in our Souls to discern the revelations of the word. And doubtless there may be to some particular Souls, some more revelations of what God intends to do in the world, and as to his or their particular circumstances than others have, they are things we cannot expect, hope or believe for, but what some may receive, and for the tryal of the truth of them, the issue must be expected, and from that the truth of their revelations, and prophecies, must be judged. And it seemeth by the answer of the Prophet *Jeremy* to *Hananiah*, that under the old dispensation, this was a piece of the Judgment, *Jer.* 28. 8, 9. *The Prophets (saith he) which have been before me, and thee of old, prophesied both against many Countries, and against great Kingdoms, of War, and of pestilence, the Prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the Prophet shall come to pass, then shall the Prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him.* Yet they must doubtless at that time have had some other way to discern a true Prophet from a false Prophet, how else could they have been charged with sin, in not hearkning to their voice, unless it were in such things which they required them to do, or to avoid, in force of the law of God given them by *Moses*, for though some of them wrought miracles, as *Moses*, *Elijah*, *Elisha*, yet we read no such thing of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, &c. But whatever that way was, it is hidden from us, & though I dare not but say that God may yet to some particular Servants of his, not only more *fully* and *clearly* reveal what he hath in his word revealed,

vealed, so as they may more clearly understand the Scriptures, and be more able to teach others, but also reveal his mind and will as to future contingencies, with reference to Nations, or Persons; yet I know no reason any hath to expect, or pray for any such Revelation; nor any others to believe it; but yet when the thing those Prophets prophecy, comes to pass, then shall we know that the Lord hath sent them. But though these be special degrees of communion, special favours, which the Lord may vouchsafe to some Souls, yet these are not certainly those Chambers, of which the Spouse here speaketh. I have before told you what I judge those to be.

Will any one that heareth me, now say unto me, Why will the Lord thus please to do? 1. *Why will he bring any Souls into his Chambers*; allow them a nearer fellowship, and communion with him, then he will allow unto others, and if he will thus treat any, *why not all?* I shall add a few words to satisfy such Souls as are so curious, and inquisitive; and then come to the practical application of this discourse.

1. He will do it to some to manifest that *he hath a delight in the Sons of men*; the wise man thus speaketh of Christ from all Eternity, as *Rejoycing in the habitable part of the Earth, and having his delights with the Sons of men.* Who can give a reason of love, and its motions in the creature? the affections of some persons to others (as we daily see) are inaccountable things; we find our own Souls, cleaving to some Neighbours, some Friends, and that we take a greater delight, and complacency in seeing them, hearing them discourse, being with them, and having them with us, then in others. Others can give no account of it, nor see any reason for it, and it may be we our selves can give our selves no great account of it, but so we do, though we know not why; and shall any one think to call God to account, to know why he sheweth more favour to one Soul, then to another? how cometh God to be more a debtor to his Creature, then man is to his Neighbour? what Man or Woman lives without their more intimate, and special friends? What *Prince* (tho never so ingenuous, and good natured, and kind to all his Subjects) is without his more particular, and special favourites? Christ as God blessed for ever; before ever that he had assumed our nature, he had a delight in the Sons of men, but upon his taking unto him our nature, we cannot but apprehend him more

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specially inclined, he therefore *took our flesh, that he might be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Heb. 2. 17. And in all things (saith the Apostle) *it behoved him to be made like unto us, that he might be a merciful, and faithful High Priest*. Christ thus being not only ingaged by the infinite goodness of the Divine Nature, to a communication of his goodness; but also by his choice, and assumption of the humane nature, engaged to a *delight in the Sons of Men*, though considering his Majesty and greatness, it behoved him not to make every Soul a Favourite, taking it up into the neareſt degrees of communion, and fellowship with himself; yet it behoved him to make choice of some Souls, to whom he will more fully, and freely make known himself in the riches of his grace.

2. Secondly, He is concerned to it *in point of faithfulness*, because of his promises. God hath given us many great, and precious promises; some concerning this life, some respecting that which is to come, we have promises of *special providence*, special *protection from dangers*, *support* under them, *deliverance* from them, promises of *special grace*, manifestative love, *Joh.* 14. 21. *I will love them, and manifest my self unto them*, &c. promises of *comfort*, *strength*, &c. Now these promises are not made good to every Soul, at all times, but it is necessary (to uphold the Lords faithfulness) that they should be made good to some Souls, and at some times; by this we know, that none of his words shall fail, that his promises are in, and through Christ all of them, *yea*, and *Amen*.

3. *By this the Lord also incourageth others to their duty.* It is sad, that we should not be willing to serve God for nothing, at least without sensible reward; but so croſt is our duty to the grain of our flesh, so many are our temptations, and discouragements, that even the most spiritual Souls must have their incouragements to duty from sensible rewards, whiles we think that every labourer in Gods Vineyard shall have his penny, we are apt to think, it is of no avail for us to labour more then others. God is therefore pleased (though one mans penny in glory may be brighter then anothers) to incourage us also with sensible rewards in this life; one Christian shall have more freedom, and liberty in his Spirit, then another, more quiet and peace in his Spirit then another, he shall find more strength unto his duty then another.

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If any further ask why the Lord doth not please to deal thus with all, who yet truly love, and fear him; we cannot enter into Gods secrets, or pretend to give an account of Gods motions. I shall only shew you that it is reasonable, that God should not so deal with all, but with some only, and that he should not at all times deal alike with the same Souls.

1. *In regard of our own incertainty, and mutability*, and *disproportion to others*; though we be made partakers of the same special saving grace that they are, there is nothing more evident upon observation, then that some walk more close with God, are more in prayer, more in reading, and hearing the Word of God, more in spiritual contemplation, and meditation, more reserved from the world, more watchful upon their own hearts and waies: nay, that the same Christian hath not alwaies the same heart for God, nor doth walk with God the same pace, nor by the same steps. Now though the Lord doth not distribute rewards strictly, according to our merits, yet he distributeth *punishments*, according to our *demerits*, and the withdrawing of these gradual influences, being species of punishments, it is very reasonable that as our hearts, and ways are uneven before God, so his ways in these dispensations should also be uneven towards us, that in the *darkness* of our Spirits, we might sometimes read the *darkness* of our loose, and sinful conversation. God thus punisheth our pride, our hypocrisy, our neglect of duty, our wilful yielding to temptations, to which we might have made a better opposition. And upon the withdrawing of these influences, we have all just reason to search, and try our own hearts, and to reflect upon our own ways, to search out (if we can) the cause, why when others are in the Mount with God, we are still kept in the valley, while they are in the *Chambers*, we are kept in the lower Rooms, this is certain, that though possibly the punishment of sin be not alwaies the next cause, moving God to such dispensations, yet we have alwaies reason to suspect it, having our Souls never so free from sin, but we may find enough to justify God in them.

2. It may be reasonable that God should thus deal with us, *that we might know* (as I told you in handling the other Doctrine) *that his grace is free*, and he a free agent in the dispensation of it. Not only *first grace*, but *further grace* also in God is free; indeed else it could not be *grace*, we should never understand the free-

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ness of grace, if it were equally dispensed. We in our little manifestations of our love to our fellow creatures, challenge to our selves a liberty, and think our selves free to shew it where we will. God certainly must in justice be allowed the same, which we should not be brought to see and acknowledge, if we saw God treating all his Servants, and at all times to the same rate, and in the same degree.

3. It may be the mind of God *to make a trial of his peoples grace*, to draw forth some habits into acts, which would not be so exercised, if some of his people were not under different dispensations, and the same Souls sometimes variously exercised. The Soul that is with the Lord in his *Chambers*, is more a receiver from God, then a giver to him. It gives him the exercise of *its faith*, in its reflex act, which indeed is not very properly an act of faith. It offereth up unto God, the sacrifice of *joy, of praise, and thanksgiving*, it followeth here in the next words; *we will be glad, and rejoice in thee.* It may exercise its love of *complacency*, and delight in God. But all this while, where is the exercise of the Souls *panting*, and *breathing* after God, of its *faith of adherence* unto, and *dependence* upon God? of its *hope in God*, and patient expectation of, and waiting for God? where is the exercise of its *patience*, and *submission to God* under severer providences? It is reasonable that God should see all those blessed habits which he hath infused into the Soul, drawn forth into act.

4. The good *Judas* asked Christ, *John* 14.22. *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thy self to us, and not to the world.* Christ told him, because they *loved him more*, and kept his *Commandments better.* There is the same reason to be assigned, why Christ will manifest himself to some of his Saints, more then to others, because at some times the love of his people more manifesteth itself to him by a stricter keeping of his Commandments, and the love of some good men is greater for God. Now to encourage men (as I before said) to perfect holiness in his fear, though he will give them all glory, yet some shall in this life have Gods goodness made to pass before them, more then others, that others may see what it is to be much with God.

5. Lastly, *God often doth it for the good of others.* And indeed this generally is the reason of that more special communion with God, which some have, more then others, as to the *Revelation*

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of his mind and will unto them; thus God would not hide from *Abraham*, the thing which he had to do againſt *Sodom*, becauſe *Abraham* had a Family to inſtruct; God taketh *Moſes* up into the Mount, and revealeth his mind, and will unto him, that he might teach the People over whom God had ſet him his Statutes, and Judgments; the ſame reaſon is to be given of Gods *ſpecial* communications to the Prophets under the Old, and the Apoſtles under the New Teſtament, and doubtleſs the ſame reaſon is to be aſſigned for Gods more full revelation of his mind and will already revealed in the Scripture, to his faithful Servants in the Miniſtry, who generally know more of the ſenſe of Scriptures, and the mind, and will of God revealed in them then other *Chriſtians* do, becauſe God deſigneth that the *Prieſts lips* ſhould preſerve knowledge, and the people ſhould enquire at them; and there is the ſame reaſon to be given for ſome more then ordinary influences of grace upon ſome Chriſtians Souls. See 2 *Cor.* 1. 4. *Bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comforts, who comforteth us in all tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them, which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we our ſelves are comforted of God.* God hath made us one for another, and in the diſpenſings out of his own gifts, and graces, he hath reſpect unto the ſerviceableneſs both of *Miniſters*, and others, one to another.

But this is ſufficient for the Doctrinal part of this diſcourſe.

Sermon XXVI.

Cant. 1. 4.

The King hath brought me into his Chambers.

YOU have heard the *Propoſition* raiſed from theſe words; *God hath Chambers, in which he ſometimes entertains the Souls of his people.* As there are ſpecialties of *common Providence*, ſo there are *ſpecialties* of ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing grace. He takes

some of those who love, and fear him, into nearer degrees of fellowship and communion with him, then he doth others. Man will claim himself a prerogative in this; the Parent will be more fond of, more kind to one Child then another, though he owns them both as his Children, and will give to them both a portion. The Prince who hath a tender love for all his Subjects, yet will be allowed his favourites.

Use 1. Let us not then accuse God in such dispensations of *partiality*, or *injustice*, let us not murmur that we have lesser shares in his *manifestative love*. This is a thing we are very prone to. Christ taught it us in the Parable of the *Prodigal*, *Luke* 15. The Son that was alwaies at home with the Father. *v.* 28, 29. was angry, and would not go into his Fathers House, no not though his Father intreated him, because the Father had *killed a fatted Calf* to entertain his Prodigal Brother returning; our Saviour doubtless intended in that parable to check the Jews envy at the kindness Christ was about to shew to the Gentiles, or did at that time shew to Harlots, to Publicans, and Sinners; but it reacheth further, we shall find all our hearts too prone to this, to repine at the further manifestations of the love of God to others Souls, then unto ours. If I do not misconceive him, *David* seems in this to have failed, *Psal.* 22. 2, 3, 4. *O my God* (saith he) *I cry in the day time, but thou heareſt not, and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the praises of* Israel. *Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them, they trusted in thee, and were not confounded, but I am a Worm, and no Man, a reproach of Men, and despised of the People*, &c. To silence this corruption so exceedingly natural to us, let me offer a few things to thy thoughts.

1. The first shall be *the Lords Prerogative, to shew mercy where he will shew mercy*. This our Saviour hints me in the Parable of the Labourers sent into the *Vineyard*, *Mat.* 20. 15. when those who had wrought all the day, received their penny, in proportion to those who had wrought but a few hours, they complained, the Master of the Vineyard saies to them. *May I not do with my own what I please?* All influxes of grace are Gods own. It is a prerogative that every one of us claims for himself, to dispose of his love, (especially some degrees of it) as we please; why should we deny that to God, which every one of us claimeth to himself? The Prince will not allow the Subject to dispose of his

his favour, no more will the Father allow it to his Child; why should we think God is not at the same liberty? especially considering;

2. That *God by it doth us no wrong.* You have this in the same Text, *Friend, I do thee no wrong, Mat.* 20. 15. This now dependeth upon this *hypothesis*, that the grace of God cannot be merited by any; he that hath the greatest manifestations of Divine love, hath them freely, & he who hath the least discoveries of it, hath what he hath freely, without any preceding merit in himself. If God will let one of his Children walk in the light of his countenance, and another to walk in the dark, and see no light, if he will treat one in Chambers, another in a low, and more common Room, yet he doth not wrong to any. There is no injustice in the case; in appearance to us, he sheweth indeed more severity to the one, and more goodness to the other, but he is unjust to neither, because neither hath merited any thing that he receiveth.

3. *God hath with-held from thee nothing for which he agreed with thee.* This is a third thing which the Master of the Vineyard told those labourers that repined, because they had not more then those who had laboured less, *Mat.* 20. 15. *Did I not* (saith he) *agree with thee for a peny?* we can lay claim to nothing of anothers, but either upon the plea of a *Native right*; thus the Child laies claim to his Patrimonial Estate, as heir at law; or *upon the account of purchase*, by vertue of some compact or agreement, or some valuable consideration given him for it; we can lay no claim to the Grace of God, as our Patrimonial right, as Heirs to it, we are indeed called *Heirs*, but it is by adoption; nor upon the account of any valuable consideration given; who hath given first to God, and it shall be repaid to him again? All the claim we can lay to any thing either of Grace, or Glory, is upon the account of a *Covenant* that God hath made with us, or with Christ on our behalf, and by us *accepted*, when we come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The question is, what God hath agreed with us for, he hath agreed with us for a Kingdom. *Fear not little Flock* (saith Christ) *it is your Fathers will to give you a Kingdom. He that believes on me, is not condemned* (saith our Saviour) he is passed *from death to life.* He hath agreed with us *for all that grace, and mercy which is necessary to bring us to this Kingdom.* That he will give us a *clean heart*, and a *new heart*,

that we shall be *kept by the power of God through faith to salvation.* But where hath the Lord agreed with the Souls of any of his people for equal measures of his manifestative love? Nay, plainly, God in the Covenant of his Grace hath reserved himself a liberty to chastise, and afflict his people, either for the probation of Grace, or for the punishment of sin, and this is one species of affliction, by which God doth both try the faith and patience, and also correct the errors, and miscarriages of the best of his people. But you will say, is not *manifestative love* promised? I answer it is, but so are not the *measures of it,* nor yet the *particular time* for the discovery of it. 2. *It is but the matter of a conditional promise,* John 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self unto him.* Psal. 50. 21. ---*To him that ordereth his conversation aright, I will shew the Salvation of God.* The promises of *Eternal life, and Salvation,* are made to *Faith,* and *holiness,* without which (both which) *none shall see God,* but not to degrees of the one, or of the other, a *weak faith* may bring a Soul to Heaven, so will an upright and sincere heart, though incumbred with many lustings of the flesh against the Spirit; but the case is otherwise as to some degrees of the *manifestative love* of God, which much depend both upon degrees of faith, and degrees of holiness also. Our Saviour hath determined doubts, and fears, indications of little faith, and reason will determine them inconsistent with much joy, peace, and comfort in the Soul; that holiness in some good degree is necessary to our peace, will appear to any Soul, that considers, that nothing but sin will break our peace with God. So that if thou beest not conscious to thy self, that thy faith is as strong as others, and thy ways as perfect before God as theirs, thou hast no reason to expect the same manifestations of Divine love; No; tho thou beest one who truly believest, and truly lovest, and feareſt God, God hath agreed with every believer for eternal life and salvation, for pardon of sin, and a clean heart, and the upholding of him by his power unto salvation: But he hath not agreed with every such Soul for the same measures of peace and comfort, the same degrees of his manifestative love, he hath reserved himself a liberty to reward those with these more special favours, who walk most closely, and exactly with him in their conversations. Those therefore who find their Souls under

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temptations, to repine at God, for doing more for others then for them, should do well to reflect upon themselves, and to consider whether the faith of those others be not more strong, and their walking with God more close and exact then theirs; if it be, they are not to wonder that their Souls are more highly favoured, and more treated in Gods Chambers.

2. But Secondly, *There being no merit in any thing we do or suffer, at Gods command,* why should we *think God obliged thus to reward the highest degrees of faith or holiness?* What if God will hear one believers prayers sooner then anothers, what if he will give one such Soul more peace then another, who shall say unto him what doest thou, or why am I thus, and others are otherwise? we certainly ought to allow the freest, and most sovereign agent, what priviledge we every one claim for our selves, with reference to our Children, Servants, Friends, whiles every of us receives more then we deserve, what reason have we to repine, because others have more then we.

4. I beseech you consider *whether this fruit floweth not from a root of Pride.* Why should my Eye be evil, because anothers is good? Why should I repine, because God is kinder (as I think) to another Soul, then to me, if I did not secretly think that I had deserved as much, and as well as those, if not better? The humble Soul looks upon itself as meriting nothing, and therefore prizeth every influence of Divine love. The Dogs eat the *crums,* said the poor Woman. I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof (saith the Centurion) therefore speak the word only. Now if this be thy root of thy complaint, be assured, there is not a more bitter one in all the wilderness of nature. There is no Soul at further distance from obtaining at the hand of God, then that Soul that challengeth God as a debtor to his Creature, if thy Soul saith, as *Haman,* to whom should the King more delight to honour then me, thou art like enough to meet with as great disappointment as he did; God sets himself to pull down the Soul, that exalts itself above measure. God will keep Souls swell'd with this tumor, with Thorns in their flesh for their buffetings, it is enough if they find his grace sufficient for them.

5. If it doth not argue this, yet it speaketh a *discontent at, and dissatisfaction with Gods methods in the conduct, and government of thy Soul, in order to that end to which he hath appointed thee.* This frame of spirit is sinful enough, it is indeed a branch

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that groweth out of the root of pride; Gods general promise is, *that he will with-hold no good thing from them that live uprightly, and that all things shall work together for the good of them that love God*; but we must leave the judgment of good to the wisdom of God, who knoweth what is good for us, while we repine at Gods dispensations, we either shew our distrust, and unbelief in these promises, or assume the judgment of good to our selves, paramount to the judgment of God. No sin more provokes God then this of murmuring, and repining. It was the great sin of the *Israelites*, which at last provoked God to swear in his wrath they should never enter into his rest. Let us therefore learn thankfully to acknowledge what grace we have received, and with silence, and patience to wait for what further manifestations of it we desire, and judge our Souls to stand in need of.

2. Br. Inst. 2. Hath the King of glory, whom we serve Chambers, wherein he treateth the Souls of his Subjects, not only *Mansions*, but *Chambers*, further degrees of gracious influxes, & manifestations. Let us then learn from hence; *That no man serves God in any degrees of service for nothing*; some indeed shall have greater degrees of reward then others, none shall serve him for nothing, there is a reward for every righteous Soul. He that serveth God in truth and sincerity, though with a great deal of weakness and imperfection, though he comes into his Service at the last hour, yet he shall have his penny, he shall have Heaven and Glory. If any will come in to Gods Service in the morning, and work in the heat of the day, and labour for God more abundantly, he shall not lose his reward; nay, he shall be rewarded according to his work, as there are degrees of active working Grace, so there are degrees of manifestative love, and this by the way.

1. *It is a great encouragement to those that are young, to turn into the ways of the Lord betimes. Josiah*, and *Timothy*, and *Enoch*, were all of them such as began early to walk with God. Of *Josiah* it is said, *Chron.* 2. 34. That when he was but eight years old, he began to seek after the God of *David* his Father, what special favour he had from God, his story will tell you; he was early taken into the Chambers of glory, and while he was upon the Earth, God treated him in his Chambers, he would not in his days bring the intended evil upon *Judah*. *Enoch walked with God*,

God, the Text saith he was not, *for God took him*. *Timothy* was a great *Favourite*, used as a great instrument for God, and doubtless these three, and so those others who have early given up themselves to God, and continued to the end, will hereafter be found in some degrees of glory above others.

2. *It is a great incouragement to men and women to put out themselves mightily for God*, to love the Lord (according to the tenour of the first, and great Commandment) *with all their Soul, and all their strength, & all their might*, God hath degrees of love to reward degrees of holiness & service, & though possibly there may be some rare instances, wherein the wisdom of God (as unsearchable) is to be adored, and not to be found out, and we may see some, who appear to us more exemplary in holiness then others, yet clouded under darker dispensations, walking in the dark, and seeing no light, yet ordinarily it is otherwise, those who walk most in the light of holiness, have more of the light of Gods countenance, enjoy most peace, and have most manifestations of Gods special love; and this now lets us see what a difference there is betwixt the service of God, and the service of the Devil, or the service of the world, many a one serves the world, and gets little, and those that make themselves least drudges to it, get most of it; he that serves the Devil in serving corruption, the more he toils in that service, the more torment he hath. But the more a man serves God, the more peace, the more inward rest and sweetness he hath.

3. *This discourse may give some relief to such Christians whose hearts are right with God, but yet their attainments are not proportionable to others.* The King hath not brought them into his Chambers, indeed the fault of this may be in our selves, and where it is so, we have reason to blame our selves, and to sit down in silence, and endeavour for the time to come to mend our pace in the ways of holiness; there are Stairs, by which Christians usually ascend into these Chambers, come up (I mean) into this near degree of communion with God, if we will not do what in us lies to climb up those steps which God hath made for us, by which we may ascend into these Chambers, we must blame our selves, if we abide below: But this is not alwaies the cause, in some cases we must have recourse to Gods prerogative, and must rest in this. *Even so O Father, because it pleaseth thee*. Some Souls are dignified with a special communion,

and

and familiarity with God, so was *Abraham*, *Moses*, *David*, yet possibly if we look into the records we have of their lives, we shall find more blots in some of them, then in some others, who we do not read were taken up into such eminent degrees of favour. We cannot give just reasons, and accounts of all Gods acts of Grace, it is enough *that God wills them.* In the mean time, if we find but a good hope through grace, an heart changed, and cleaving to God, if we can say with *Peter*, Lord thou that knowest all things, knowest that we love thee, though we cannot boast of such *special providences as others*, nor of such *visions of peace*, nor of so *quick an hearing of our prayers*, tho we dare not pretend to be such favourites of Heaven, yet let us not be discouraged, possibly as to us the Lords time is not yet come, possibly it never will come, God is a great Soveraign, and unquestionably free as to these things, he knows what is best for us, he will deny no good thing to us We may say of the whole Family of God, as the *Queen of Sheba* said of *Solomons*, 1 *Kings* 10. 8. *Happy are thy Men, happy are these thy Servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.* There are some of Gods Servants, that as to these enjoyments are more happy then others, but there are none but are happy, none but have reason for ever to admire the difference which God hath made betwixt them, and others; to admire what God hath done for their Souls, bringing them out of the horrible Pit, if they have not, if they cannot see reason to rejoice in such a prospect of Heaven as others have, yet they have reason to rejoice in an equal deliverance from Hell.

Use 4. I will shut up this discourse with two words of exhortation. 1. The first directed to those who can say with the Spouse, *The King hath brought us into his Chambers.* 2. *The second to those who walk with God, but have not yet arrived at this.* Are there any who can speak the language of the Spouse, and glory in this, not only that they are brought home to Christ, but that the King hath brought them into his Chambers, the Lord hath dignified them with some special favours, and manifested himself more to them then unto others, the following words of this Text will let them know what is their duty. *I will* (saith the Spouse) *be glad, and rejoice in thee, and remember thy loves more then Wine.* 1. *Be glad, and rejoice in God*; we are often called to for this *rejoycing in the Lord*, *Psal.* 33. 1. *Psal.* 97. 12. *Phil.* 3. 1. 4. 4. and in many other Texts. Such is the portion of Gods Children, such their state

state, and condition, that they have a continual cause of rejoycing, and giving of thanks; be they under what circumstances they can, there is ground enough for them in all things to give thanks, but they are more eminently obliged to it, when they are under the highest manifestations of Divine Love. This *rejoycing in the Lord* is (I conceive) opposed, both to a carnal joy in sensual objects, and also to a *rejoycing meerly in that ease, and satisfaction*, which the good thing giveth us, for which we rejoice. As now, suppose a rich man giveth a poor man 20 *s.* it is one thing for the poor man to rejoice in the gift, as suited to to his necessitous circumstances, another thing to rejoice in the *love* and *favour* of the *giver*. This is now the duty of the spiritual man; he ought not only under the manifestations of divine love, to *rejoyce in the Lord*, more then in all the world, and all the affluences, and contentments of it, which is expressed in the next phrase, *we will remember thy loves more then Wine*, and is commensurate to what *David* saith, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, for thou shalt thereby make my heart more glad then in the day when their Corn and Wine increased*. I say this is not enough for a Soul thus dignified, he ought more to rejoice in *the favour of* God shewed him, in these specialties of his favour, then in the *ease, and satisfaction*, which the mercy received giveth unto his Soul. And herein lieth the purity of the spiritual mans joy, nor is his joy genuine, and perfect till it come to this pitch.

2. The second phrase in the Text, expressive of this dignified Souls duty is, *We will remember thy loves more then Wine*. The term remember is taken in Scripture in a great latitude, and expressive both of all that *affection* which is due to the remembrance of the object, and of all that *practical duty* which is consequent to it. I shall touch a little upon both these, and that very shortly, for I shall, God willing, speak to both these expressions in order more fully.

1. *Remember Christs loves*, with the *remembrance of the heart*. I shall instance but in one fruit of this, and that is *faith*. *Remember his loves*, so as for them to *trust in God more*, and to cast the care of thy Soul in an hour of distress, the better upon him, upon consideration of thy past and present experience. We are too ready, both to forget our *sorrows*, and to forget our *comforts*, to forget our *sorrows*, by giving our selves a liberty to the same sins for

which we have smarted, and to forget our *comforts*, by giving liberty to the same dejections, and despondencies again, after the experiences of Gods favour.

2. *Remember Christs loves practically*, so as to make them obligations upon your Souls, *to a close walking with God.* See the example of *David*, *Psal.* 116. 1, 9, 12, 18. But I shall speak all this over again, when I come to handle the next words, and shall therefore add no more.

2. Br. My second Branch of this *Exhortation* shall respect those whom God hath not thus far *dignified*; the Lord hath (as they hope) *admitted them into his family*, but he hath not yet brought them into his *Chambers.* Some communion with God they hope they have, and an heart that panteth after a more full, and near communion with him, but this they have not yet attained to, they walk in the dark, and see no light, the Lord giveth them an heart to pray, but they cannot glory in such a full, and quick return of prayers as others have; they have not that inward joy and peace, which as to some Souls is consequential to believing; the question is now, what they should do, what their duty is, under their present circumstances. I will open it in two particulars.

1. *Certainly they ought not to despond, and be dejected, and conclude against themselves, as if they had no share in the love of God*, much less to repine, and murmur against God. Against murmuring I offered you some considerations under the first branch of application. Against condemning your selves, or concluding against the goodness of your spiritual state, I shall offer something now. There is no ground at all for any such conclusion from these providences. The Childs right to the Father is not to be determined from the portion, much less from any particular expression of the Fathers affection, if the Child be begotten by the Father, if owned by him as his Child, this is enough, tho some other Child may have more smiles, and some particular expressions of kindness which it wanteth. If a Christian hath any evidence, that he is born again, not of the *will of the flesh*, nor *of the will of man, but of the will of God*, born again of the Spirit, by *the incorruptible Seed of the Word*, this is enough to entitle him to a Sonship, if he hath *received the Lord Jesus Christ*, this *John* 1. 12. gives him a right to be called the Child of God, and this *new birth* is discoverable by the new features in the

the Souls face, the Souls assimilation to God in holiness. If these things be found, it is a most unreasonable conclusion to conclude against thy Sonship, for want of some special favours bestowed upon others, and not upon thee; so as there is no ground for thy reprobating thy self upon this account, and concluding against thy spiritual state, because of thy want of some degrees of spiritual priviledges by others enjoyed; nor hast thou more ground to *despond*, and to *deject* thy self, as if thou never shouldst attain what thou hast not as yet attained. *David* sets us a rare example in this case, *Psal.* 42. 5. *Why art thou cast down O my Soul, why art thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.* The longest night hath a morning following, there commonly is a circulation in Divine Providence, and as to the Soul of man, day, and night, Summer, and Winter, follow one another, as by a Covenant, he that doth not grieve willingly, nor willingly afflict the Children of men, will not be alwaies crushing the Prisoners of the Earth, nor suffer the Souls which he hath made to fail before him.

2. As thy condition will prompt thee to endeavour to amend it, and to make the case of thy Soul more easy; so I would have *thee look upon it as thy duty.* St. *Paul* had not attained, but he *forgetting what was behind, pressed forward to what was before, unto the price of the high calling.* It is the state of our Souls, that we are not perfect, neither as to *action*, nor as to *fruition*, but it is all our duty to strive after perfection, both after a perfection with respect to action, which the Apostle calls a *perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord*, and a *perfection as to fruition*, as to the enjoyment of God, you have heard that the King of Glory hath Chambers, in which he entertaineth some of his peoples Souls, admitting them to a fuller, further, and sweeter enjoyment of himself then others have. Let therefore no Christian sit down fully satisfied, till he get up into these Chambers. I have shewed you a Christian ought to be so far satisfied, as if God pleaseth to chain him for a time in a lower room (my meaning is to lay a necessity upon him to live beneath these Mountains) not to *repine & murmur against God, not to conclude against his spiritual state, and interest in God, not to despond, and deject himself*, and conclude that, because it is now dark, it shall never be light with him, but yet he ought not to be so far satisfied, as not to look after

2. Br.

higher degrees of enjoyment of, and communion with God. There are all the arguments imaginable to be pleaded in this case. Whether from *profit*, or *pleasure*, or *honour*, &c. But those are so obvious, that I shall but wast time to inlarge upon them. Every Soul that hath any spiritual sense, will acknowledge the desirableness of this. But will some Souls say, what shall we do, that we may attain them. I have but four things to offer in this case, with which I will conclude.

1. Study to abound in *active grace*. The grace I am speaking of is that grace wherein man is partly *passive*. Active grace is that by which we are inabled to our duty in obedience to the will of God; the Stairs by which Souls ascend to the *Kings Chambers*, mentioned in the Text (as I have interpreted it) are the steps of universal holiness, which the Apostle calls, an *holiness in all manner of conversation*. The promise of Gods shewing his *Salvation*, *Psal.* 50. 21. is made *to him that ordereth his conversation aright*, *and the promise of* Gods *manifesting* himself to his peoples Souls, is made to them *that love Christ*, *and keep his Commandments*. It is true, God sometimes useth his prerogative, and hides his face from the most pious, and holy Souls, for a time, and shutteth out their supplications from him, you have instances in holy writ, as well as in our daily converse, but it is past all controversy, that those enjoy most of God who walk most with God, and the closest walking is the most sweet and comfortable walking. Study therefore to excell in holiness; that's the first.

2. *Behave thy self well in the lower Rooms*. Look to thy self, while God keeps thee in a dark condition, that thou dost not add to thine own Chains, and lengthen the hours of thy darkness; affliction is Gods School, by which he fits us for consolation. Dost thou ask me what I mean by behaving thy self well? I answer short. 1, *Being watchful*, and striving against sin, those corruptions especially, which thou shalt discern most busie in such an hour, such as murmuring, unbelief, impatience, *&c.* 2. *Keeping up thy hope and faith in God*, so did *David* (as I shewed you) *Psal.* 42. 5. Blessed are they saith our Saviour, who have not seen, and yet believed. 3. *Humbly* acknowledging thine iniquities, thy unworthiness to receive the least mercy, or look of grace from God. 4. *Panting & thirsting* after fuller degrees of communion with God; thus *David*, Psal. 63. 1, 2. *My Soul longeth*, *my flesh thirsteth for thee*, *to see thy power*, *and thy glory*, &c.

3. *Ab-*

3. *Abstract thy self as much as thou canst from the world.* You shall observe that the Servants of God have chosen *Mountains* places of solitude, and removed from the noise of the world, when they designed any acts of more special communion with God, so Christ often went *into a Mountain to pray.* And God oft chose such places more specially to communicate his mind to his people. It was in the Mount God talkt with *Moses, face to face, as a man talks with his friend.* Divines have observed that those Persons who have enjoyed most of God, have been, such as have been (I will not say most, but) much in contemplation, which brought contemplation afterward into a superstition, and a contemplative life to be cried up beyond all sense or reason.

4. Lastly, Be much in prayer.

But I have spoke enough upon this argument.

Sermon XXVII.

Canticles 1. 4.

We will be glad, and rejoyce in thee. We will remember thy loves more then Wine. The upright love thee.

I Am now come to the Fourth thing considerable in this Second Petition of the Spouse. I have done with the *Petition, Draw me.* 2. With the *Argument* by which she inforced her Petition; *We will run after thee.* 3. With the *Spouse's Attestation* of the quick acceptance of her Petition: The *King hath brought me into his Chambers.* I have only to consider the Effect that this Love had upon her, that is expresst in the words I have now read. *We will be glad, and rejoyce in thee,; we will remember thy Loves more than Wine.* I have opened the words before: *We,* I and all Believers, we who being many are yet one body, united by one Spirit, Members under the Government of one Head; we who have tasted and experienced thy goodness *will be glad.* The word in the *Hebrew* גיל, is expressive of the largest dilatation of the heart upon union with its object. It is used, *Isa.* 65. v. 19.

v. 19. *Prov.* 24. 23. *Psal.* 21. 1. *Psal.* 2. 11. & 13. 11. *Zech.* 9. 9. [*and rejoyce in thee.*] The word again here used, is often used in the Old Testament, *Exod.* 4. 14. *Jer.* 31. 13, &c. I shall not undertake to justifie the *Critical distinction* some make betwixt these two words, as if one were restrained to the more inward motion of the heart, the other more expressive of the more external gestures, or actions, signifying that affection [*in thee*] in Christ, as the principal object, and in the significations of thy love to us. The Proposition is shortly this.

Prop. *Jesus Christ, and the manifestations of his love to believers Souls, particularly in answering prayers, are the singular objects of their joy, and rejoycing.* In order both to the explication and confirmation of this Proposition, I will guide you a little into the understanding of the nature of Joy, 2. Consider *how Christ can be the object of the believers joy*, and is more the object of his joy, then of another mans. 3. *How he is the special singular object of their joy.*

Take joy considered in itself, it is but a natural plant, a power God hath given to every reasonable Soul, the object of it is some good, to which it is in some degree united, and it is greater or lesser, according to the nature of the good, or the degree of the apprehension. There is in all joy, *satisfaction*, and *rest*, and something of *musick, or melody.*

1. There is in all joy a *Soul satisfying fulness*, desire speaks some emptiness in the Soul, and is the Souls motion in order to a satisfaction, the like might be said of *hope*, but all *joy*, speaketh a Soul satisfaction, according to the measure of the joy, the rejoycing Soul hath alwaies in it a fulness, and a pleasing fulness; that is the first thing in the nature of it.

2. There is in all joy *a rest* that quieteth the Soul; the desiring, thirsty, hoping Soul is still in motion, being in the pursuit of something which it hath not attained, but the rejoycing Soul is at rest; *David* in the hour of his joy saith, *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul! For God hath dealt graciously with thee.* That is a second thing in joy.

3. There is in all joy something of *musick* and *melody*, hence that phrase of *leaping for joy*, hence singing and shouting, are the natural expressions of joy; thus joy may be described to be *a natural power, or inclination of the Soul, by which having more perfectly, or imperfectly obtained an union with the object which it de-*

desired, or hoped for, it is in proportion satisfied, and well pleased, at rest, and keeps as it were a festival within it self.

Two things are required to make an adequate object of this joy. 1. *The thing must be good.* 2. *We must have some apprehension both of the goodness of it, and our union with, and interest in it.* 1. The object that our Souls rejoice in, must be something which either is good, or which at least we apprehend to be so, the nature of good lieth in a suitableness and conveniency of a thing for us, and whatsoever we apprehend suited to any of our wants, or convenient for us in any of our circumstances that we call *good*, and whatsoever we apprehend under that notion, whether it indeed be so or no, we love, and if we want it, we desire it, if we apprehend it probable to be our portion, we hope for it, if we have it, or apprehend we have it, we delight, and take a complacency, and rejoice in it. 2. So that secondly, to make an adequate object of our joy. *There must be some apprehended union betwixt our Souls, and the object we rejoice in.* For although we can love, and take a secret complacency in an object which appeareth to us as good, yet it is *propriety* in it that causeth our joy and rejoycings. Thus far now I have only considered, and discoursed of joy, philosophically, as it is a natural affection, working upon its proper object.

Let us now consider it as a grace, or sanctified affection. Grace doth not plant new powers in the Soul of man, it only turns the *natural powers* to their proper objects.

Our Saviour tells us, *there is none good but God*, God is the *Summum Bonum*, the first, and chiefest good, nor is any thing good, but what deriveth from him. *Christ is good*, supremely good, as in him there is found, what is suited to the greatest wants and emptinesses, that the nature of man is exposed, and subject to. And that the *believer* more valueth Christ then another man, ariseth only, 1. *From his different apprehension.* 2. *From his different relation to him and interest in him.*

1. From the *different apprehensions of good which the believer hath, from those which are in other men.* I told you before, that the nature of good lieth in the suitableness, or conveniency of a thing to our wants and emptinesses. Man is a creature made up of two essential parts, the *Body* and the *Soul*, that which suiteth the one, or the other we call *good*. The Soul is considerable, with respect to a *present*, or *future state*, the first is that which alone

lone the most men are *sensible* of, or *concerned* for. We have a threefold perception of an object, according to which we judge of the goodness, or badness of it.

1. The first is by the *Eye of sense*, according to which we judge that good which gratifieth the exteriour senses, this of all is the most unmanly judgment of it, thus the man of pleasure judgeth those things good, which gratify his eyes, ears, tast, smell or touch, and indeed this is the judgment of the greatest part of the world, when they say, *who will shew us any good?* this is all they understand by it, who will gratify our sensitive appetites? These are the things they desire, delight, and rejoice in, these men rejoice in nothing, but in pleasures, profits, or honours, such things as either serve the lust of the Eye, or the lust of Flesh, or the pride of life.

2. A second Eye by which we discern good, and accordingly judge of it is the *Eye of Reason*, God hath indued man with a reasonable Soul, which hath several powers and faculties, amongst the rest, the understanding, by which I understand that power in man, by which he apprehendeth things, and the reason of them, and takes the impression of notions, that which is suited to this we call good, and upon a much truer notion then the other.

Hence is some mens thirst, and desire of *knowledge*, and *knowledge* is as sweet to them, as *Wine* is to the Drunkard, they discern an excellency in the mind, and Soul, above what is, or can be in the fleshly part of a man, and delight more in understanding, then the voluptuous man doth in pleasure, or the worldly man in wealth, that is *their good*, for which they contemn pleasures, and all sensual satisfactions.

3. Our third way of apprehending good, is by *the Eye of faith*, which the Apostle tells us is the *evidence of things not seen*. There are some whom God hath so far enlightned by the revelation of his will, as they do not only know that they have bodies, and a sensitive part, which requireth satisfaction to its several cravings, and a more noble part, which is the *mind*, capable of understanding things, and the reasons, and causes of them, but *Souls* (an immortal part) capable of the favour of God, of an union and communion with him, they know that the happiness of man can lie in nothing beneath the favour of God, nothing beneath an union and communion with him, they have read it in the Word of God to which God hath wrought in their hearts

hearts a firm and full assent, that no man cometh to the *Father* but by *Christ*. There is no other name given under Heaven, no other way by which they can arrive at a true peace and happiness, either in this life, or in that which is to come. And from hence it is, that all their desires are after Christ, all their hope in him, and he becometh their chief joy.

2. A second reason of their rejoicing in Christ more then other mens, lies *in their different relation to him, and interest in him*, or apprehensions at least of that *relation*, and *interest*. I told you before, that although an apprehended good be the object of our *love*, before we enjoy it, the Soul cannot but take some pleasure, and complacency in what he apprehendeth under that notion, yet while the Soul cometh to have some relation to it, some propriety and interest in it, though it may move towards it by desire, and hope, yet it comes not to a joy, and rejoycing in it, till it comes to have some *apprehension*, that it hath *obtained it*. You may see this in other things; suppose a man of the world to fancy a great estate, or a great degree of honour and dignity to be good, or that an ingenious Child fancieth the like of *knowledge*, both the one and the other may desire these things at a distance; the man of the world may wish he had such an Estate, and the Schollar may wish he had such degrees of learning and knowledge; but till the one and the other have attained what they desire in some degree, they cannot rejoice in it, neither is their mind satisfied, nor at rest. It is the same case as to a *spiritual man*. He is enlightned to see he hath a Soul of a further capacity, then the most men understand their Souls to be, that he hath some further wants, then the most understand that they have, he believeth the Scriptures, and understands that he wants peace, and reconciliation with God, he understandeth that there shall be a Resurrection, a day of Judgment, and that he must one day be in an happy, or in a miserable eternity, so as he wants the security of a better life, when this life shall be at an end, upon this account he may be pleased with the thoughts of Christ; as he by whom these good things alone can be obtained, he may desire Christ, he may hope in him, but till he comes to apprehend that he hath obtained a part, and interest in him, it is impossible he should rejoice in him, and according to his apprehensions of his interest, so is his joy, and rejoycing in Christ. There must be some union betwixt the Soul, and its object, before there can be any joy and rejoycing.

1. *There is an union of contemplation.* We cannot so much as contemplate a desirable object, but our Soul must have some union with it, and there will a proportionable joy attend this; indeed this will be of all other the weakest in degree, because this is the lowest degree of union imaginable. Thus a man may rejoyce in the contemplation of a door of salvation opened to Mankind by Christ, before he hath made any use of it at all to enter in thereat. Thus the Angels at the Birth of Christ proclaimed *glad tidings, and joy to all people.*

2. There is an *union of hope*, when the Soul doth not only contemplate some great and eminent good, but apprehendeth it attainable by itself, tho not without some difficulty; as this union of the Soul with its object, now is closer, and fuller then the other, so the joy that resulteth from it, must necessarily be more: hence in Scripture you read of the rejoycing of hope, which the Apostle would have believers keep firm.

3. There is an union of *sensible possession*, or (which is the same) of *faith, and full persuasion*, which makes things unseen visible to us, and as this of all other, is the most full, and perfect union, so it causeth the most full, and perfect joy, it most satisfieth the Soul, and brings it most to its rest, and causeth the greatest triumph, and festival in the Soul, even a peace which is past all understanding.

There is no believer but hath obtained one of the two latter *unions* with Christ: No unbeliever that hath obtained more then the former. An unbeliever may have heard, that Christ came into the world to save Sinners, to seek, and to save that which is lost, and may have a proportionable joy, but alas, how little must it be, while he neither seeth a need of him, nor yet can have any apprehension, that he hath any share or interest in him? It can be no more then as the rejoycing of an understanding man, to hear that an able Physician is come into the Country, before he is sensible of any need he hath of him, or hath had any experience of his skill, and ability.

But there is no true believer, but either *hopes in his mercy, or hath some assurance of his love*; and from hence it is. 1. *That the true believer alone can rejoyce, truly rejoice in Christ.* 2. *That one believer rejoyceth in him above what another can.*

I say, the true believer alone can rejoyce in Christ, for *he alone is sensible of that goodness, and excellency that is in him*, and he

he alone is apprehensive of any relation, that he hath to him, or any interest in him; others are without Christ, he alone can say, *my Lord, and my Saviour.* And hence I say it is that one believer can *rejoice in Christ more than another*, because one mans apprehension of his part and interest in Christ, may be more full than anothers. One hath but the apprehension of a good hope, the other may have a full persuasion. But though there may be a great difference in the degrees of believers joy, yet they concur all in their object. *Christ* is the *object*, the *singular object* of all their joy.

After this discourse; I need not enlarge in telling you how Christ becomes their *object of joy*, not meerly considered, as God blessed for ever, nor meerly considered as *Mediator betwixt God and Man*, and the Saviour of lost Sinners, if he were not so, they could not rejoice in him, but neither doth his being so give them any cause of rejoycing; but in the notion in which he is mentioned all along this Song. *i. e.* considered as their *Bridegroom*, as united unto them, and having a particular favour, and relation to their Souls. For though good considered abstractly, may be the object of our *love*, *desire*, and *hope*, yet only *good united to us is the object of joy*, yea, and *good apprehended* by us as our portion; and according to the degree both of our union with the good, and apprehension of that union, so will our joy be.

And hence again, the most perfect joy of believers, must necessarily be in their glorified estate, hence Heaven is called *Our Masters joy*, for as our *union* with God and Christ will be there most full, and perfect, so our apprehension of it will be most clear, and *not interrupted.* But that is not the theme of my present discourse, I am speaking of the object of believers joy in this life, not in that which shall be in that life which is to come, when their joy will be unspeakable, and full of glory.

I added in the Proposition, that Christ is the *singular object* of their joy. We will (saith the Spouse) be glad, and rejoice *in thee*; this is true, both *exclusively*, and *inclusively.* 1. *Exclusively.*

1. *He will rejoyce in nothing inconsistent with the fruition of Christ.* There is a sensual rejoycing in the satisfaction of mens lusts; this is the joy of an Epicure; the Drunkard shouts for new Wine. And you read of some whose *rejoycing was to devour the poor*, *Hab.* 3. 14. I told you before that *joy* is nothing else but the sa-

tisfaction that the Soul hath, and the rest which the Soul takes with the *Triumph* which it makes in its union with that Object which it judgeth good. Now the gratifying of *lusts*, and pleasing the senses, and the *concupiscible*, or *irascible appetite*, being that which low-born Souls have chosen as their good; their rejoycing in this satisfaction is natural to them. This Joy is but for a moment, *Job* 20.5. and shall one day be turned into heaviness; *Jam.* 4.9. This mirth, this laughter is madness, as *Solomon* speaks, *Eccles.* 2.2. like *the crackling of Thorns under a Pot*, *Eccles.* 7. 6. *Sorrow*, saith *Solomon*, *is better than it*, for those that thus laugh, shall weep, *Luk.* 6.25. The Soul that loves Christ cannot rejoyce with this Joy. *Charity rejoyceth not in evil*, 1 *Cor.* 13. This is inconsistent with the enjoyment of Christ, and of his favour, with that *self denial*, which is necessary to those that will be his Disciples, with that *taking up of the Cross*, which is another Law of his Discipleship.

2. It is exclusive of *rejoycing in any thing without him*. Though Christ, and his *Love* and *Favour*, be the believing Soul's supreme good, the One thing which he desireth, yet there are other things which he may and doth account good in their order. God hath not forbidden a man to rejoyce in the Wife of his youth, and in the Children which God hath given him; nor in those providential dispensations, by which he accommodateth the lives of his people, and maketh them more sweet and happy; but the believing Soul cannot rejoyce in these things, unless at the same time he seeth reason also to rejoyce in Christ. Men of the world can rejoyce in full Barns, & Coffers, though in the mean time they have no sense, no hope of the pardon of their sins, and reconciliation with God; the reason is, because they have set up these things as their chief good, and are not affected with the concerns of their Souls, as they relate to Eternity: But neither can the Believer partake of these Joys: The Soul can neither rejoyce in any enjoyment exclusive of its chief good, nor yet in any thing in the absence of its chief good: A believing Soul in any measure satisfied concerning the Love of God to it, can rejoyce in the Wife of his bosom, in the Children which God hath given him, in the accommodations with which God hath blessed him as to the sweetning of this life, but without some assurance, or some good hope at least (through grace) that Christ is his, and he hath the favour of God in and through his blood; he can rejoyce

joyce in none of these things. It was a peevish expression of *Haman, Esth.* 5. 11, 12, 13. When he told *his friends of the glory of his riches, the multitude of his Children, and all the things wherein the King had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the Princes and Servants of the King*; and how that *Esther* had invited him, and none but him and *the King to the Banquet which she had prepared*; and added, *All this availeth me nothing so long as I see* Mordecay *the Jew sitting in the King's gate. Envy slayeth the fool* (saith *Solomon.*) But every pious Soul, when he thinks how God hath blest him with a loving Wife, sweet and dutiful Children, a plentiful Estate, yet saith, *All this availeth me nothing, so long as I suspect, and fear, that I have no part or Interest in Christ. There be* (saith *David*) *many* who will say, *Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their Corn and Wine increased.*

3. The *joy of the Soul* in Christ is such, that it can rejoyce *in him alone.* It is the expression of the Prophet *Habakkuk, ch.* 3. *v.* 17, 18. *Although the Figg-tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit in the Vine, the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no Herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, and I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* The believing Soul can rejoyce in nothing without Christ, and it can rejoyce in Christ when it hath nothing more to rejoyce in. Let a gracious Soul have but the sense of God's Love in Christ to his Soul, he can say to all the world as *Esau* (though not upon such a consideration) said to his Brother *Jacob, I have enough my Brother, I have enough, keep what thou hast unto thy self.* Am I justified and regenerated? have I peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? have I the pardon of my sin, and a righteousness wherein I can stand before God? it is enough. If the Lord will not give me Bread to eat, nor Children to continue my name; if I die Childless, so I do not die Christless, it is enough. If I have not Raggs to cloth me, nor an Estate to leave Portions to six, and also to seven, yet I have said to the Lord, *Thou art my Portion, it is enough.* Hence ariseth a good Christian's contentment in all Estates. *I have learned* (saith *Paul*) *in all estates to be content, content to want, content to abound,* content to have little or much as the Lord pleaseth. If the Lord will take away such a man's Chil-

Children, Estate, &c. he saith with *Job*, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* If I have my part in Christ (saith he) I have yet enough. *Omnia mea mecum porto*, I have my All, as the *Philosopher* is reported to have said, when his City was on fire, and his Neighbours reflected on him going out, and carrying nothing along with him, nor concerning himself for the share of Estate he had in it. If the Believer considereth his body, he seeth a crazy constitution, diseases growing upon him; if he looks into his Family, and seeth it empty of Children; if into his Grounds, and seeth them bring forth nothing but Weeds, and Thistles; if into his Stalls, and seeth them empty of Cattel; yet if he looks into his Soul, and finds any evidences of the Love of Christ, he can rejoyce in them; this must be understood, when he seeth himself stript naked, not by his own wicked hands, but (as *Job* was) by the effective *Providence* of God, for the loss of the things of this life, the good things of the common Providence of God, caused by our own sinful hands, and miscarriages, oft-times hinder this Joy, as they make it difficult to us to see the Love of God in and under them.

4. And lastly, This Soul rejoyceth in Christ, *Primarily, Emphatically, Supremely.* The Child of God is a partaker of flesh and blood, and hath a sensitive appetite, which when gratified, necessarily causeth a joy proportionate to the good which it receiveth; hence he rejoyceth in the good things of common Providence, as well as another man, but not as much as another man, not upon the same account that another man doth. Christ is the Believer's *chief Joy*; and as his title to the good things of this life differs from the title of another, so his joy in them differeth from the joy of another. All men may have a natural, legal title to the good things of this life; Dominion and Title is not founded in grace, but it is mended by grace. Another man derives from God as the Lord of the whole Earth, who by his common Providence distributeth portions to the Sons of men, as he pleaseth, but the believer doth not only derive from God, as the supreme Lord, but *from Christ; all is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods* (saith the Apostle) so that while he rejoiceth in the gifts of common Providence, he rejoiceth in Christ, because he rejoyceth in these things as coming from the hand of a Father, reconciled to him by the blood of Christ;

Christ; he rejoiceth in the good things of this life, as the loving Wife reioiceth in some present made her by her Husband, not so much in the fineness, or costliness of it (though that may also please her humor) as in the kindness, and love of her Husband shewed in giving it her. So the believer more rejoyceth in the goodness of God shewen to him in any dispensation of Providence, then in the thing which God hath given him or her; and he supremely rejoiceth in Christ, whiles he rejoiceth in a lower comfort. Let me shew you this in the instance of *Hannah*, whose story you have, 1 *Sam.* ch. 1, 2. She was the Wife of *Elkanah*, she had no Children, and was passionately desirous of the blessing of Children, an affection common to all (of that sex especially) and for which there was some more special reason in that Age and Nation, partly because of the promise of a numerous issue to *Abraham*, so as the Women that were Barren, lookt upon themselves as hardly the genuine Children of *Abraham*, at least not sharers in his blessing; partly, because they knew the *Messias* was to be born of a Jewish Woman, and every Child-bearing Woman might have an expectation to be his Mother. Under this great affliction she applies her self to God by prayer (the Key of the Womb is one of those Keys which the Jewish Doctors say God keepeth in his hand) God hears her prayer, she conceiveth, and brings forth *Samuel*, as in the first Chapter, she names him *Samuel*, to testify her joy in receiving him as an answer of her Prayer, upon which she dedicates him to the Lord, 1 *Sam.* 1. 28. So in the second Chapter she sings a Song of praise; mark the phrase of it, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. *Mine heart rejoyceth in the Lord, my Horn is exalted in the Lord.* Her Child was the next object of her joy, but how doth she rejoice in him; the primary object of her joy was the Lord, her great joy in *Samuel* was as God, by giving him to her, shewed her his love, and that he had not shut out her supplications from him. She rejoyced in God, *Supremely*, in *Samuel Subordinately*; in God *Emphatically*, in her Child more remissly. Thus doth a good Christian rejoice in Christ, thus is he the singular object of a believers joy. *David* calleth God the *gladness of his joy*, (we translate it *his exceeding* joy) *Psal.* 43. 4. The Prophet *Isaiah* saith, *Isaiah* 29. 19. *The meek shall encrease their joy in the Lord, and the poor amongst men shall rejoice in the Holy One of* Israel. Yet the proximate cause was, *v.* 20, *Because the terrible one was*

brought

brought to nought, and the scurner consumed, and all those that watched for iniquity cut off. Hence Christ commandeth his Disciples not to rejoice in this, *that the Devils were subject to them, but that their names were written in the Book of Life*; Doubtless the subjection of Devils to them was true matter of joy; ah! but it was no primary object, no supreme object of their joy; no otherwise the object of their joy, then as it was an evidence of Gods favour. It is a great piece of the Spiritual mans art, to rejoice in God, while he rejoiceth in the creature, to make Christ the *gladness of his joy* (as the *Psalmist* expresseth it;) now this motion of a pious Soul will appear to be natural, supposing him to be first enlightned to discern, and to be fully perswaded, that the *love of Christ to the Soul* is the greatest good the rational Soul is capable of; this will appear to you, if you will but consider these three or four things.

1. *That the presence and joyment of some good, of which the Soul stands inneed, and in the pursuit of which it is, is the true and natural cause of the motion of that affection which we call joy.* This is evident both to sense and reason; we rejoice not in *evil*, but in *good*, not in an *absent*, but in a *present good*, in the sense, and manifestation, and apprehension of it.

2. That the *loves of God* and *Jesus Christ*, are the *greatest goods in the world*, and therefore the presence, and sensible manifestations of them, are the enjoyments and manifestations of the supreme good. The very light of nature shewed the Heathen, that the happiness of man lay in his *union* with the *greatest good*, thus far they were agreed by their common reason, though they could not so well agree what that *chief good* was, & nothing hindred them from agreeing this truth, but their want of true knowledge of God and Christ, and of the possibility of a poor creatures, having an union with him, or any kind of enjoyment of him, or understanding the need their Souls stood of the loves of Christ, for agreeing that the happiness of man lay in an union with the supreme good, they wanted but the revelation we have of mans wants, and the possibility of this blessed union with, and fruition of God, but they must have agreed this truth.

3. *It it but natural to the Soul to rejoice more in the obtaining of a greater good, then in the obtaining of what is lesser, and to rejoice most in a good, most comprehensive of other particular goods,*

though

though it wanteth those particular good things. Who is there who doth not naturally more rejoice in the getting of five hundred pounds, than of five? because the five hundred pound is a greater good then five; who doth not more rejoice in a great stock of mony by him, then in a great quantity of Bread, or a great Wardrobe of Cloaths? the reason is, because Mony is comprehensive of these, he that hath Mony, can buy Bread and Cloths.

4 Lastly, *It is but natural to us to rejoyce in nothing, which we apprehend incompetent with that good wherein our chief happiness doth lie: Nor in the having of any thing which we enjoy, whiles we want that which we look at most of all.* Rachel was a good Woman, *Jacob* was her Husband, to whom she was exceeding dear, he had a plentiful estate, 'tis hard to say what good she wanted, save Children only, that blessing her heart was upon, *Jacob*, was nothing, his estate nothing to her; she goes to her Husband, and cries, *Give me Children, or else I die.* Now admit a believing Soul to be firmly persuaded, that it must live for ever, either in eternal happiness, or in eternal misery, and again to be persuaded, That it can never live in eternal happiness, without an union with Christ, without his love manifested to it in the pardon of its sins, and the imputation of his righteousness, admit the Soul to be fired in the pursuit of these things as its chief good; how is it possible that it should rejoice in any thing incompetent with it, or that it should rejoice in any thing with an equal joy, as it rejoiceth in this? Hence it followeth, that Christ must be the singular object of the believing Souls joy.

1. Because it is *impossible the Soul should rejoice in what is incompetent with the fruition and enjoyment of what it rightly judgeth its chief good.* Such are all sensual prohibited satisfactions.

2. Because *it is impossible it should rejoice in what it judgeth a lesser good, more then in what it judgeth a greater, and transcendent to it.*

3. Because *it knoweth Christ and his loves are comprehensive of all other good, for if he hath given us Christ* (saith the Apostle) *shall he not also with him give us all things?*

Thus I have opened, and shewed you the reason of the Proposition, *why the Soul rejoyceth in Christ.* I added, and *in the manifestations of his love, particularly,* in *hearing* and *answering its prayers*; I shall give you some reasons of that, and then apply the whole discourse. But, *&c.*

Sermon XXVIII.

Cant. 1. 4.

We will be glad, and rejoice in thee.

I Am yet handling the Proposition at first laid down. I shewed you the last day how Christ is the singular object of the Spouses joy. I added then, *and the manifestations of his love, especially in hearing and answering our prayers.* Indeed Christ is no otherwise the object of our *joy*, then in *the manifestations of his love.* All joy requireth some sensible manifestation, or experience. The personal excellencies of Christ, make him the object of our *love*, whom (saith the Apostle) *having not seen, yet we love.* Love asks for nothing but amiableness in its object, no more *doth desire* (which is the first born of love) but *joy* requires *propriety* and *union*, Christ manifested to the Soul, can alone be the object of *joy*, but I added, *especially in hearing, and answering Prayer*; that was the case here; the Spouse had prayed, *draw me, and we will run after thee,* — she presently triumpheth in the *hearing of her Prayers*, and then addeth, *we will be glad, and rejoice in thee.* I might have also added, *prayers put up particularly for spiritual mercies.* We shall all along in Scripture find this made a great matter of joy in the hearts of Gods people, take the instances of *Hannah* and *David*. *Hannah* had been, 1 *Sam.* 1. praying unto God for a Child, the Lord answered, see how she rejoiceth, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. *Hannah* prayed and said, *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine Horn is exalted in the Lord, my mouth is inlarged over mine Enemies, because I rejoice in thy salvation.* Concerning *David* we have many instances, *Psal.* 31. 21. *Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong City.* v. 22. *Thou heardst the voice of my supplication, when I cried unto thee*, Psal. 3. 4. *I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me from his holy place*; in this he rejoiceth, and triumpheth, *v.* 6, 8. *Psal.* 6. 8. *The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, the Lord hath heard my supplication*

supplication, he will receive my prayer. So again, *Psal.* 18. 6. & again, *Psal.* 28. 6. *Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications,* so *Psal.* 116. 1. But there needeth no Scripture in the case, the experience of every Soul maketh it good, it is natural to every man.

1. *Because in all answers of Prayer, there must be a soul satisfaction upon some union with the object, which it desired.* Joy is nothing else but the triumph of the Soul upon its union with the object which it desired. Prayer is nothing else but the Souls desire expressed with its voice. The answer of Prayers must be the Souls satisfaction in the obtaining of its desires, this satisfaction ariseth from its union with its object, upon which joy is but a proper, and natural result, and consequent.

2. *In all answers of Prayer, there is an owning of the Soul by God.* As the Soul by Prayer owneth God, acknowledging him the Fountain of that goodness, which it beggeth; so God in answering Prayer acknowledgeth the Soul, *Job.* 9. 31. *We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a Worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* All giving in of things prayed for, doth not speak the answer of prayers. God may hear and relieve, the cry of the *miserable*, when he doth not answer the prayer of the righteous. I have before hinted to you, that there is an answer of our *cries*, which floweth from Gods common providence, as he is a God of pity, and tender compassions, and there is an answer of Prayers, which comes from God, as a God of *truth* and *faithfulness*, how to distinguish these two, I may possibly shew you in the application in some measure, it is the latter answer, not the former, which is Gods owning and acknowledgment of the Soul, as one for whom he hath a favour.

3. There is yet one thing more in the answer of prayers, last mentioned, which to every thinking Christian is matter of great joy. *That it is that which speaketh the Soul to be beloved of God in Christ*, and to have Christ for his Advocate, and Intercessor at the Throne of Grace. It is in him that *all the promises* are *Yea*, and *Amen*. *It is in his name* that the believer asketh, and it is he that doth the thing desired, according to the promise, *John* 14. 13. *Whatsoever you shall ask, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, and because the thing is confirmed, the promise is doubled. *v.* 14. *If you shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* I shall add no more to the Doctrinal part of my discourse.

Use 1. This notion (in the first place) distinguisheth the Child of God from all Men and Women in the World. He is the only man, that is *glad, and rejoiceth in Christ*, the only person that can say of Christ, he is his chief joy.

1. There are many that *rejoice in their sensual satisfactions*. There is a man that *shouteth by reason of Wine*, *Psal.* 78. 65. their *Vivere est Bibere*, the pleasing of their Senses, their Palate, and Eyes, and Ears, is the greatest good they know, after this their Souls move by desires, and in the satisfaction of them they rejoice, their mirth is *madness*, and their laughter what doth it? this of all other is the most sordid joy, a rejoycing in iniquity, yet this is the *chief joy* of many poor creatures.

2. To others *the World is their chief joy*. Their heart *rejoyceth in their labour*, as the wise man speaketh, *Eccl.* 2. 10. they look on all the work that their hands have wrought, and on the labour they have laboured to do, and they rejoice; the gladness of their heart ariseth from the increase of their *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oil*, and they know no better things to rejoice in. For this rejoycing in Christ, in the sense of his love, and the pardon of their sins, and the hopes of the glory of God; alas! how few understand any thing of it? I have often had occasion to tell you, that the spiritual state of a man or woman, is not so much to be determined from his *understanding*, and the *notions* there, men and women may have great degrees of knowledge, and yet have unsanctified hearts, nor from their *external actions*. An *hypocrite* may do many things, and the best of Gods people in many things offend, as from the motions of his *will*, and *affections*: He *chuseth the things that please God*. *To will is present* with me saith *Paul*, and consequent to this are the workings of the *affections*. Thus a Christian is known by the objects of his *love* and *hatred*, his *hope* and *fear*, his *desire* and *joy*. The last is what I have to do with in this place. *Joy* is one of the fruits; one of the fairest fruits of the *holy Spirit*, *Gal.* 5. 22. will any say to me, how shall I know my state by the workings of this *affection*? the answer is in the Text, the believer *rejoyceth in Christ*; the Apostle tells us that those that are the *true circumcision*, *worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus*, *Phil.* 3. A believer is not a *Stoick*, as to the things of the World, he lives in it, and hath need of the things of it, but Christ is his *chief joy*, or the head of his joy, as *David* saith of *Hierusalem*, *Psal.* 137. v. 6. But you will say, how shall we know this, whether Christ be our chief joy? I answer,

1. *Those*

1. *Thou wilt not, thou canst not rejoice in any course of sin, which is contrary unto Christ.* St. *Paul* tells us, *That he delighted in the law of God after the inward man*; he could not glory in a total freedom from sin, he complaineth *that he was sometime brought into Captivity to the law of his Members*, *Rom.* 7. 22. But he did not rejoyce in iniquity. Wicked men sport themselves against God. *Against whom do you sport your selves*, *Isa.* 57. 4. *Solomon* tells us, *That it is a sport to a fool to do mischief*, & tells us of one who deceiveth his Neighbour, and saith, am *I not in sport?* his joy is either in the satisfaction of his *concupiscible appetite*; thus St. *Peter* tells us of some, *That they count it pleasure to riot in the day time*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 13. or in the satisfaction of his *irascible appetite*; thus some sport themselves in doing, or beholding mischief, *they rejoice at the destruction of him that hateth them*, which was a thing *Job* purgeth himself from, *Job* 31. 29. or at the destruction of those that they hate, they *rejoice to do evil*, *Prov.* 2. 15. Yea, and to see evil done, as *Edom* rejoyced when the Jews were carried into captivity. But now the Child of God can be a sharer in none of those joys. These joys are incompetent with a rejoycing in Jesus Christ, these men rejoyce in those things which crucified Christ. I cannot say but a good man under some great temptation may feel some tickling pleasure in sin, and the satisfaction of his appetite through ignorance, or passion, but he can have no *fixed joy* in any thing of that nature. As a wicked man may have some fit of sorrow for sin, so a good man may have some fits of pleasure, and delight in sin, but neither of them will be constant and abiding; a good mans pleasure in sin, is but a fit of sensuality, a wicked mans trouble for sin is but a fit of distast. It is a good sign that he or she rejoiceth in God, and in Christ, that can find no sensual satisfaction to rejoice in.

Secondly, It is a sign that Soul truly *rejoyceth in the Lord Jesus Christ, that can rejoyce in no sensible enjoyment, without the sense of God's love in, and through him.* The unquietness and dissatisfaction of the Soul, in the midst of all its sensible comforts, if at any time it wants the sense of God's love, and the pardon of its sins, in and through Christ, will much evidence Christ to be the *Head of his joy*, or his *chief Joy*. There are few Souls in this life, whose daies are without clouds; sometimes they walk in the light, sometimes in the dark, and see no light; now for a Soul under the fullest affluence of created comforts, to be able c

able to rejoyce in nothing, in the absence of the sense of Christ's love, is an excellent sign. *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 2. when God bid him ask him what he should give him, replyeth, *Lord, what canst thou give me so long as I go childless?* This now argued that a *Child* was the chief of his desires, and the *chief Joy* which he had in prospect. *Abraham* had a plentiful Estate, a beloved Wife, but his dissatisfaction, for want of an Heir, spake a Child to be his *chief Joy*, an object which his heart was ready more to rejoyce in, than in all that he had besides it. When the Soul is at this pass, that it can say, Lord, thou hast given me an Husband, or a Wife and Children, and I acknowledge thy goodness in them; thou hast given me a plentiful Estate, and I desire to bless thy Name for that; but Lord, what canst thou give me? what canst thou do for me? so long as I want the sense of thy love in Christ, all these things are nothing to me, whiles I have this dissatisfaction; though it will not speak the Soul at this time actually rejoycing in Christ, yet it will speak Christ to be its *chief Joy*.

Thirdly, It is a sign that Christ is the chief Joy of the Soul, *if it can rejoyce in Christ alone*, when there is no fruit in the Vines, when the Figg-tree doth not blossom, and the labour of the Olives faileth (as *Habakkuk* expresseth it) that is, when all sensible external satisfactions fail. That Soul which hath not chosen Christ for his portion, will hardly be content with *Christ alone*. *Mephibosheth* declared that *David*'s return in peace to *Hierusalem*, was his *chief Joy*, when upon *David*'s saying, *Thou and* Ziba *divide the Lands*, he calmly replied, 2 *Sam.* 19. 30. *Yea, let him take all, for as much as my Lord the King is returned to his House in Peace.* It is said of the Primitive *Martyrs*, *Heb.* 10. 34. *That they indured with joy the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in Heaven a far more induring substance.* Our hearts may be ready to deceive us in this point, when we only put a case to our Souls, and the thing appears at a distance. It may be therefore we may come to a nearer judgment, what our Souls would do in such a case, by observing the frame and temper of our Spirits, and what their support is, under smaller losses, and deprivations of more external comforts. There is none of us but at some time or other, suffer something from the hand of God immediately, or from the hands of men. We lose possibly a dear relation, or a part of our estates, supposing now that at this time thou hast

no

no apprehensions of the wrath of God, no fears as to the pardon of thy sins, and thy interest in Christ, how is thy Spirit under such providences? canst thou look above them, and yet rejoice, that thy Christ is not taken from thee? if you should see a Woman in the loss of a Child or Children, yet lifting up herself above her sorrows, and blessing God, that it is not her Husband, he is yet alive, you would easily conclude, that her Husband was her chief joy, though she had some pleasure, some satisfaction in her Child, yet her Husband was the head of her joy.

4. Lastly, Canst thou joy in Christ *Supremely?* not in thy mercies so much as in the God of thy mercies, and in thy mercies only as thou seest the favour, and goodness of God in them; you read, *Luke* 10. 17. that after Christ had sent out the 70, they after some time returned, and made this report to him. *Lord, even the Devils are subject unto us through thy name.* Christ tells them, *v*, 19. *Behold I give you power to tread on Serpents, and Scorpions, over all the power of the Enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you, notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the Spirits are subject unto you, but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.* God saith thus to many of his people, *Behold I give you* comfortable Wives, towardly, and dutiful Children, plentiful Estates, success in your tradings, and worldly businesses. I set an hedge of providence about you, whatsoever you take in hand doth prosper. Notwithstanding rejoice not in this, let not this be the great matter of your content and satisfaction. But rejoice in this, that I have given you my Son, and through him, the pardon of your sins, and favour with me, an evidence, that your names are written in the Book of Life. He that can do this, makes Christ the *head of his joy.* And if you can do this,

1. You will be more troubled at the fears, or apprehensions of the loss of Christs love, then at the fears or apprehensions of the loss of any external satisfactions whatsoever.

2. You will be rather willing to part with all, then to do any thing that may hazard your loss of Gods favour. Thus the *Martyrs* shewed that Christ was their *supreme joy.*

Let us labour to find this evidence of grace in our Souls, to bring up our hearts to be *glad, and to rejoice in Christ in that manner as I have opened to you,* and particularly *to rejoice in the* Use 2.

answer

answer of our prayers, I will inlarge upon both these branches a little.

Br. 1. Let us be unquiet in our spirits until we find that our hearts are brought to this, *to rejoyce in Christ solely and supremely*; to rejoyce in him as our *righteousness*, as our *strength*, as our *portion*, as our *All in all*. I told you before that the Apostle, *Phil.* 3. thus describeth a true Christian, one that was of the true *Circumcision*: (The Jews he calls there the Concision) but saith he, *We are the Circumcision, who rejoyce in Christ Jesus*: He speaketh there of a rejoycing in him as our *Righteousness*, as he from whose perfect Righteousness alone, the Soul expecteth Salvation. This is in opposition to a *rejoycing* in any *Birth-priviledges*, or *Church-priviledges*, or any *Works of our own*, as things that will serve us in any stead without a part in Christ, when we shall another day come and appear before God's Judgment Seat. O study thus to rejoyce in Christ, as he *who hath trodden the Wine-press of his Fathers wrath alone*, and in his body upon the Cross suffered whatsoever was due to the Justice of God for the sins of Believers, as he who alone hath fulfilled the Law for us, and in whom alone we are *compleat*. This is our duty, but this is not what I am here chiefly speaking to.

2. *Rejoyce in Christ as your portion*, as your *All*; make him your chief Joy. I would press this great Exhortation by some few Arguments, and then give you some Counsels in the case.

1. *Consider how vain and transitory the objects of all other Joy are*. There are but three things that I know we have to rejoyce in; or at least all things of that nature will fall under three Heads. They are either *sensual satisfactions*; these are the objects of the *voluptuous debauched Souls* Joy: Or secondly, *Sensible Enjoyments*; these are the objects of the *worldling's Joy*: Or thirdly, *Spiritual blessings in Christ*; these are the objects of the Believer's Joy. Let me a little shew you the vanity and transitory nature of the two former. One man rejoyceth in the *satisfactions* of his sensual appetite, in the pleasure of his Eye, and Ear, and Palate, and Flesh: Shall not these things be the torments of the Soul to Eternity For what think you shall any Soul perish for ever, if not for having pleasure in riot, in drunkenness, in lasciviousness, or in other sordid satisfactions? are these any more then brutish satisfactions beneath the rational Soul? will these things last for ever? will there not a time come,

come, when you shall say you have no pleasure in them; nay, doth not the pleasure of them perish with the using, and go out like a Candle, leaving a stench behind it, leaving some sour reflections upon the conscience, which the little tickling of pleasure which they afforded, no way compensateth. O vain man! to make those things his chief business, satisfaction and joy, which will bring the greatest bitterness in the latter end? You compass your selves about with sparks, this you shall have at the Lords hand, you shall one day lie down in sorrow. For the more civil, and reclaimed sort of men, whose *chief joy* is in the increase of their *Corn*, and *Wine*, and *Oil*; how vain, how transitory is this Joy? whilst thou hast them, what necessities of thy Soul do they suit? will they give thee peace when thou art under any disturbance of mind? will they fit thee for, or advantage thee in any spiritual operation? of what advantage can they be to thee as to another life, when as thou comest to die? when thou diest, leave them all behind thee, and write upon them, *Whose shall these things be?* Nay, mayest thou not out-live all the comfort and satisfaction which thou hast in them? Or, may not they in a moment, by a Fire, by a Thief, by an Oppressor, be taken out of thy sight? Are they not Gourds, that come up in a night, and serve a little to shadow us from the heats, and shelter us from the storms that we meet with in this life; and may go down in a night, and leave us as much as any other exposed to the storms of this world? Are these things fit for the chief Joy of a reasonable Soul, a spiritual and immortal being that is under an Ordination to an eternal Existence, and professeth to know, and to believe so much? On the other side, is the *Believer's Joy*, who rejoyceth in Christ, so misplaced? Cannot he give the Soul the pardon of sin, and sense of that pardon, which produceth that peace which is past all understanding? Cannot he give the Soul a righteousness wherein the Soul shall another day stand before God, and not appear naked? Cannot he give Eternal Life? and doth he not do it to whomsoever he pleaseth? and will he give so great things, and not food convenient for us? Or, shall not he that giveth the Soul Christ, with him also give it all things?

2. Consider *how vainly thou hopest to enter hereafter into the Lord's Joy, who hast not rejoyced in him*. Canst thou imagine, that Christ will be rest and satisfaction to thy Soul in Heaven,

when thy Soul hath taken no pleasure nor delight in him here. But you will say, what need these words? need any Soul be perswaded to rejoyce in Christ, if it were a thing in his own power? and if it be not, to what purpose are we so perswaded and intreated to it? To this I answer:

It is true, it is not in thy power to *rejoyce in Christ*. We cannot rejoyce in any thing, be it never so good, unless we have a *property* and *interest* in it, and have *some sense and apprehension of that interest*, so that it is no more in our power, to rejoyce in *Christ*, than to give our selves an interest and part in him, and a sense and apprehension of that interest, both of which are the gift of God. But yet we may do something in the use of the common grace of God, given to all of us who sit under the Gospel, in order to our having a part and interest in him.

1. *We may read the Scriptures, and hear the Word of God, and meditate upon what we read and hear*, in order to our conviction of that infinite excellency that is in Christ, and his suitableness to the state, and necessity of our Souls. We must see a goodness and an excellency in him, before we shall love him, desire him, or delight in him; this goodness, this excellency is revealed to us in the Word of God; this we must believe, or we shall never lie under such a conviction. It is God that must give us a power to believe it, but we may read the Word, and hear it opened and applied, in order to this; God (as I have before told you) concurring ordinarily with his special grace, with our use of that common grace which he affords us.

2. *We may study and meditate upon the vanity of sensual joy, or joying meerly in sensible things*, and how unfit they are to be the chief Joy of our Souls.

3. We may thirdly, *Cry to God to give us our part in Christ*; throughly to perswade our hearts of our absolute need of him, and of that transcendent goodness and excellency that is in him. O that men would but do what lieth in their power to do, and not complain they can do nothing, because they can indeed do nothing efficaciously without God's special grace, as to any truly spiritual acts.

Br. 2. Secondly, I would speak to those who have an interest in Christ, *that they would labour to grow in this grace, to be more glad, and more to rejoyce in Christ*. It is a duty often called for in Scripture, and I fear [illegible]tle regarded. I speak now upon advantage,

vantage, to you that understand you have Souls under an ordination to an eternal Existence, that know the state of the Soul by nature, and have tasted also how good the Lord is; to you, to whom Christ is precious, and whom you will easily acknowledge your chief Joy; I am calling to you, but for the exercise of an habit, with which God hath indeed indued you, the exerting of a power with which God hath blessed you, the using of a right which God hath given you There are amongst others two great causes why Christians do not so rejoyce in Christ as they ought to do.

1. The first is, *Their giving too much way to unbelief and despondency.* Though we cannot *increase our own Faith without special grace assisting*, yet we may promove our unbelief, favouring our despondency, and cherishing our doubts, and giving way to our groundless fears, and forgetting the Covenant of Grace, not saying often enough to our Souls, *Why art thou cast down O my Soul!* &c.

2. The second is, *Their too much carnality or worldliness.* Where almost is the man to be found that cannot rejoyce in his worldly Affluences, although he wants the sense of the Love of God in Christ? or, that if he were tried, would not find it an hard matter to rejoyce in God, if the Fig-tree did not blossom, and there were no fruit on the Vine? How ready are we to rejoyce in our creature-comforts when we have them, more than in the Love of Christ to our Souls? whence is this but from our too much savouring, minding, and living upon Earth, and earthly things?

Is the hearing of Prayers such a matter of joy to a gracious man? how should this engage us, 1. So to *pray, that we may receive an answer of them from the Lord?* 2. *To look after our Prayers, and the answers of them, that the sense of such an answer may excite our joy in Christ?* As to the first, I have spoken so fully to it under the first Doctrine I handled from this Text, that I shall not need again to inlarge upon it here. I shall only inlarge upon the second. Br. 3.

Foolish Children that shoot Arrows, and never look after them, lose that pleasure and content in their game, which those have who observe what becomes of their Arrows, and how near they come to the mark to which they are directed and levelled. Formal Christians who send up Prayers to Heaven, and never

look after them, never consider whether the Lord answereth them yea or no, lose that pleasure and satisfaction which the Soul hath that watcheth his Prayers; and with *David*, when early in the morning he hath directed his Prayers to God (as *Psal.* 5. 3.) *looketh up*. You read of the Prophet *Habakkuk*, when, *chap.* 1. he had been putting up his Prayer to God, he resolveth, *chap.* 2. *v.* 1. *to stand upon his watch, and to set himself upon the Tower*, watching to see what God would *say unto him*. Here now comes in a considerable question, *viz.*

How a Christian shall know whether God hath heard and answered his prayers yea or no? The difficulty lies upon two things: 1. *Upon God's different ways of answering.* 2. In regard *we may receive the good things we receive from God, meerly from him as a God full of pity, and tender compassion, seeing, and pitying the misery and needs of his creatures* (as our Saviour saith, He hears the young Ravens when they cry unto him;) Not as from a God in Christ reconciled, and hearing us upon the account of his *Truth*, and *Promise*, and the Intercession of Christ. Now the answer of those Prayers only, which are answered upon the account of Christ, and testifications of the Love of God in Christ can bring the Soul to a *gladness* and rejoycing in Christ upon that occasion and motive. As to the first,

1. I see no reason for a Soul that hath been importunate with God for some good thing, which it hath not yet received, if it finds it self satisfied under the want of it, and content to submit to the Will of God in the denial of it, and to resign up it self to his good pleasure as to the collation of it upon him: I say, in such cases as these, I see no reason for a Christian to question whether this answer be from God, as a God of *Truth* and *Faithfulness*, fulfilling his *promise to the Soul*. His promise to his people is to with-hold from them no *good thing*, that is, nothing which shall be truly and really good for them, considered in their circumstances: Now where a sensible good is with-held, and denied, that a *real good* may be bestowed, and the Soul is also brought to see its own mistake in the desire of that sensible good, and to acquiesce in the good pleasure of God, in not giving it; nay, to acknowledge, that it is better for it not to have it, and is quiet, and satisfied; certainly this is one of the cleerest answers of our prayers, and no Soul ought to question but this is a return of prayers. Let us put a case. Suppose a

Christian

Christian lying under the power of some mortal disease, under which he hath often prayed, that if it were possible, God would make the bitter Cup of Death to pass from him: Still he or she groweth weaker and weaker, worse and worse, as to his or her bodily state; but they find within themselves a further contentedness with the good pleasure of God, a power to *glory in their tribulation*, and *to rejoyce in the hopes of that glory of God to which its affliction is bringing it*; a desire, not to be *unclothed* meerly, and *free from its pain*, but *clothed upon*, that mortality might be swallowed up in life. What reason now hath a *Christian* to suspect whether this be in answer to its prayers, and flowing from God as a God of Truth fulfilling his Word; seeing (as the Apostle saith, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5.) *He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who hath also given us the earnest of the Spirit.* It is a good thing here that is given the Soul; it is given it by God; it is he who hath wrought the heart into this frame. It is given in upon, and after earnest prayer; and though it be not the very thing in *specie*, which we asked, yet it is in value more, abundantly *compensating* the things we asked, and finally, the thing which we did ask, we asked with submission to the Will and Wisdom of God; so that as to these kinds of answers, I take the ease to be clear.

2. As to the *giving in of such spiritual mercies as we have begg'd of God, in their kind*, whether they be *peace of Conscience, strength against temptations, power against corruptions, sensible consolations, more freedom and liveliness unto, and in duty, there is as little reason to doubt, because they are the very good things we ask.* 2. Of such a spiritual nature, as God doth not use to give them to Souls that are strangers to him. 3. The matter of promises: The only thing that I can fancy why a Christian should make a doubt here, is, because they may be consequent to the removal of some bodily distempers, whose influence upon the mind, might cause those troubles, that *weakness* or *dulness*, such as *Melancholy*, &c. But hath God no hand in bringing or removing such bodily causes? if he hath (as certainly there is no evil in our bodies more than in our Cities, which he hath not done) why may not God both *afflict us* as to our spirits, by sending such distempers upon our bodies, and also remove the former, which are the effect, by the removal of the latter, which he hath made to be the cause. So that admit these

things

things consequent to the removal of some bodily distemper, yet they are the effect of God, and may be, and ought to be looked upon as the answer of our prayers.

3. The greatest difficulty of judgment in this case is as to those things which are but τὰ βιωτικὰ, the things which concern this life, which God giveth to the righteous as well as the wicked, to the sinner *crying* unto him, as well as unto his Children: How a Christian shall discern that God when he gives him in these mercies, gives them in as *a God of Truth and Faithfulness*, remembring his promise to his Servants; nor indeed is this Judgment very easie to the most discerning Christian. Something I shall say in the case, whether what will be satisfactory or no I cannot tell.

1. *If they have been given in after prayer made with a Spirit indifferent* (not too importunate I mean for the receiving of them we may hope well. We may observe in Scripture, that sometimes common good things have been wrung out of the hands of God by too much impatience, and importunity, which have never proved blessings. Such were the *Quails*, Num. 11. 31, 32, 33. the Text saith, *while the flesh was yet between their teeth, e're it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the People.* Such was the *first King* given to the *Israelites* (even *Saul*) the Prophet saith, *Hosea* 13. 11. *I gave thee a King in mine anger.* But when a *Christian* begs of God any good thing, without too much *impatience*, and *importunity*, with an *indifferency of Spirit*, resigning up himself to the will of God, as to the receiving of it, and God after such a prayer gives in the mercy, I know not why we should not conclude it an answer of prayer. This I think was the case of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. She was indeed *grieved*, and *troubled*, because God had denied to her the blessing of a Child, in this trouble she prays in a solemn manner, we read not of any anger in her Spirit against God, any impatience, or sinful importunity, but she prays as a Woman of a *troubled Spirit*, the Lord gives her a *Child*, it was but a mercy of a *common nature*, wicked Women have Children as well as others; but it is given in after a *solemn prayer*, she looks upon the Child as begged of God. *For this Child* (saith she) *I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my Petition which I asked of him.*

2. I shall add but one thing more, *viz. When together with the good*

good thing, there is an heart given to the person to improve, and make use of it for the honour, and glory of God. James lets us know that God never gives us in mercies in answer to our prayers, and as evidences of his love and faithfulness, that we might consume them upon our lusts, when he tells those to whom he wrote, James 4. 5. *You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts*; when God giveth us in an outward mercy, if he giveth it us in performance of his promise, and in token of his love, and favour, he together with it gives in an heart inclined, and ready to make use of it for the honour, and glory of his name. This is also exemplified in the case of *Hannah*, in the text before-mentioned, 1 Sam. 1. 27, 28. *For this Child, saith she, I prayed, the Lord hath given me my Petition which I asked of him, therefore also I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he liveth, he shall be lent unto the Lord.* In the margent of your larger Bibles, you will see it may be read; *He whom I have obtained by Petition, shall be returned to the Lord.* You have another no less famous instance of it in *David*, Psal. 116. v. 1. *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and supplications. The Lord hath heard his voice.* v. 1. *He had inclined his ear unto him.* v. 2. *The Lord had dealt graciously with him.* v. 7. *He had delivered his Soul from death, his Eyes from tears, and his feet from falling.* Now mark the product of this. *He loved the Lord, because of it.* v. 2. *He resolveth to call upon the Lord so long as he lived.* v. 9. *To walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* v. 13. *To take the cup of salvation, and to call upon the name of the Lord.* v. 14. *To pay his vows.* v. 16. *To be the Lords Servant.* v. 17. *To offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving,* &c. Now where upon prayer for a more common mercy, suppose *life, health, riches, success in business,* we find that the Lord hath given us both the thing which we asked of God, and an heart to honour God with it, and to make a due improvement of it, we have there no reason to doubt, but that it is given us in answer to our prayers, and in testification of his faithfulness and love towards us. This now is of great concern to us, in order to our gladness, and joy in him upon the receiving an answer of our prayers; for how shall we rejoice in him, upon any such occasion, unless we discern our good things coming from him. This I think is enough to have spoken to this question, and upon this whole argument. I shall now proceed (as God gives me opportunity)

tunity) to the other effect this mercy had upon the Spouse, *We will remember thy loves more than Wine.* But of this hereafter.

Sermon XXIX.

Cant. 1. 4.

—We will remember thy Loves more than Wine.

YOU heard in my last discourse the first *effect*, that the *Beloveds* favour, shewed to his Spouse, in the *quick return he made to her prayers*, and the *royal favour* he had bestowed upon her, in bringing her into his *Chambers*, admitting her to some more special, and intimate degrees of communion with himself, had upon her; it put gladness into her heart, and brought her up to an *exulting* and rejoycing in him. *Joy* is but a *passion, cito fit, cito perit*, that doth not last alwaies, it is like a Landflood, that is sometimes up, but will in a short time abate. Ordinary Joys do so. But the Spouse resolves to keep up here, and to this end she saith, *She will remember the Loves of Christ*, and give them a memorial suited to their excellency. *We will* (saith she) *remember them more than Wine*, or (which is the same in the *Hebrew dialect*) *Before Wine.* I shall immediately close with the Proposition.

Prop. *The Soul that hath once received the grace of Christ, will remember his Loves more than Wine.*

In the handling of it, I shall keep to my usual method of *Explication, Confirmation*, and *Application.* In the Explication I shall inquire what is here meant by *Christ's Loves*; 2. *What is meant by Wine*; 3. What by *Remembring the Loves of Christ more than Wine.*

We met with the same word, *v.* 2. the *Septuagint* translate it μαστός σου, and according to them the *Vulgar* Latine, *Ubera tua*, thy *Breasts*; that which causeth the different reading is the cognation of that word which signifieth Love, with that which signifieth a *Breast* (the difference is only in the points) the mat-

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ter is not hard to compound; for those that will have it translated *Breasts*, agree in the sense, *thy Loves*; all the difference is, we contend, the word in its original signification primarily so signifieth; they say it so signifieth only in a figure. By Christ's *Loves*, she doubtless meaneth the *manifestation of his Love*, which she calleth *Loves*, because of the variety of them: But of these I have had occasion heretofore once and again to discourse. The term *Wine* I have also before opened. We all know that in its primary & literal signification, it signifieth the *Juice of the Grape*; certainly this is much too low a signification for this place: It hath besides this a figurative sense in Scripture, and so it is either taken *Synecdochically*. Thus *Bread and Wine* in Scripture doth often signifie all things necessary for our food and subsistence; or *Metaphorically*, for whatsoever is sweet and *delicate*; and this I take to be the genuine sense of the words. *We will remember thy Loves more than all worldly enjoyments, how necessary or pleasant soever.* I am aware of some other senses, which some Interpreters put upon this phrase, but I take them to be forced and strained. This seems without more adoe to be the plain and unconstrained sense of the words. But having before opened these two terms, that which I have principally to attend, is the opening of that term *Remember*.

1. *Remembring* properly signifieth a *reflex act of our understanding*, by which the former impressions which we have received either of notions, or things, is revived, and brought again to our minds and thoughts, whatsoever we receive either by our exterior senses, or by our common sense or any other way, maketh an impression upon us; now this impression, through the coming in of a variety of other objects, is apt to wear out, and die in our Souls, when the thoughts, or notion of them revives, and is repeated upon our Souls, then are we said to *remember* the things. In this sense it is a meer natural Act.

2. It is an usual observation of Divines, that *words of sense used in holy Writ, do not signifie the bare acts of those senses which are expressed by them*, but those *affections which are excited by such acts in our Souls, and those effects which those acts do ordinarily produce in our actions and conversation*. And so this term *Remember* is often used in holy Writ. When *Solomon* calls to the young man to *Remember his Creator in the daies of his youth*, he intendeth not only the *act of his memory and understanding*, that

he should call to mind that he had a Creator, and what a one he was, but that he should *remember to love him*, and to *fear*, and *obey him*; to pay him the homage that was due to him, *Eccles.* 12. 1. When the people of God in Scripture prayed that the Lord would *remember his tender mercies*, *Psal.* 25. 6. And *David* prays, that the Lord *would remember him, and all his afflictions*, *Psal.* 132. 1. and that *the Lord would remember his Word unto his Servant*: He prays that the Lord would shew him the goodness that he had promised, and suit his dispensations of providence to his afflicted state in proportionable succours. So when God's People promise to *remember* him, the promise is not of a bare act of the *memory* and *understanding*, but of the several *powers* and *faculties of the Soul*, usually set on work by such a notion and remembrance of things of that nature, so as the remembrance of the Loves of Christ signifieth several things.

1. *The keeping the expressions and manifestations of his Love upon our thoughts, or retrieving the thoughts of it, if they have slipt us, or the impressions of it have been in any measure worn out.* Thus *remembring*, is opposed to *forgetting*. To the practice of any duty incumbent upon us, is not only required our notion or knowledge of the thing as our duty, but the presence of it in our thoughts at the time when it is to be done by us; for, let us know it never so well, if we do not think of it, in the season when it is to be performed, we shall not do it. Now, saith the Spouse, *We will remember thy Loves*, that is, we will keep a fresh scent and impression of them; the savour of what thou hast done for my Soul, shall not go off my Soul. This is the duty of every good man and woman; it is in it self an homage to God; God hath given us a *power* of *remembring*, and thus we give unto God the homage of that power of our Souls. Our *memory* is as the chest of our Souls, which God hath given us not only to lock up worldly things or notions in, but to lock up in them spiritual notions and impressions. Two waies we serve God with our memories, 1. *When we use them to retain spiritual notions*, to keep up the *Knowledge of God*, and the things of God in us, 2. *When we use them as repositories for the works of God*, for the retaining in our minds what God hath done for us. 2. As it is in it self an homage to God, the homage of that power in us which we call the *memory*; *so it is the Mother of all our other homage*:

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we must *remember* a thing past, before we can be *afresh affected with it*; before in the sense of it we can do any thing, which such a dispensation calleth us for.

2. *It implies a meditation and pondering upon the Loves of Christ.* *David* promiseth unto God not only a meditation of his *Law*, and *Word*, his *Statutes* and *Precepts*, *Psal.* 119. 148. 15 but also of his *Works*, *Psal.* 77. 12. 143. 5. The Works of God are either more *publick* and *general*, or more *private* and *personal*. There are Works of God without us, such are his Works of *Creation* and *Providence*; works of God upon us and within us, such are all his works of special grace: They are either such as are *abiding* (in their *effects* at least) or transient; the latter are the objects properly of our memories; the other are the objects of our contemplation and admiration. Now, as we cannot *remember* any thing but we must think upon it; so the remembrance of any object maketh way for further meditation upon it; the Spouse promising to remember Christ's Loves, promiseth not only the revival of them in her thoughts, but the feeding of her thoughts with them, the fixing of her heart upon them.

3. *It implieth suitable affections*; the exciting of such *inward affections in the Soul, as the remembrance of so sweet and obliging objects are proper to excite.* Such as love to God, further thirstings and breathings after God, a suitable hope and confidence in God. *Unbelief* in Scripture is called a not *remembring*, because *forgetfulness* is one cause of *unbelief*, Psal. 78. 42. *v.* 41. *They turned back, and tempted God, and limited the holy one of* Israel, there was their *unbelief*. v. 42. *they remembred not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the Enemy.* So *Mat.* 16. 9, 10. Christ calls his Disciples *men of little faith, for reasoning with themselves*, because they had *brought no bread* in a *distrust* of his power, and *goodness* in providing for them, *v.* 9. 10. *Do you not understand, nor remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many Baskets full you took up.* Our Saviour there chargeth their unbelief upon their *not remembring* the former works of God. No man doth rightly remember the *loves of Christ*, but he who is suitably affected with them, and whose Soul moves toward God, as one that remembreth his love.

4. Lastly, *Remembring implyeth a suitable practice.* Thus it is often used in Holy Writ. *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy*

Youth, is the same with Serve, and Obey thy Creator, and *Remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day*, is the same with be diligent and make it thy business to sanctify the Sabbath-day. So then the sense of the Proposition is plainly this.

Those Souls which have once tasted how good the Lord is, and have had any experiences of his special saving grace, will, and ought to be careful to preserve the savour of it upon their hearts, to think, and meditate upon them, to be suitably affected toward God, according to the nature, and degrees of them, and accordingly to manage their conversations, that men may see that they value them above all the pleasures *and* profits of this world.

Thus did *Asaph*, Psal. 77. *v.* 10. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high, I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old, I will meditate also of thy works, and talk of all thy wondrous doings.* these were the ancient works of God in kindness to his people, as you will find, *v.* 14. 15, 16. *My mouth* (saith *David*) *Psal.* 63. 6. *shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches, because thou hast been my help.* So *Psal.* 143. 5. *I remember the days of old, I meditate on all thy works, I muse on the work of thy hands.* You will find the people of God in Holy Writ, much in these *resolutions* to remember the works of God.

1. There is great reason for our remembrance of the loves of Christ more then *Wine.* 1. *Because they really are much better than Wine.* Every mans Soul doth naturally desire good, good and evil are the two things which make impressions upon the mind of man, evil leaves an impression of *fear*, and *sorrow*, and *anger.* Good makes an impression of *love, joy, delight*, and as are the degrees of the one and the other, so are the impressions made by them. Great evils make deep furrows in our Souls, and leave great impressions upon our minds, minute evils leave lesser impressions; so things that are good in the highest degree, leave impressions of *joy*, and *delight*, suitable to the nature of that good which is in them. The manifestations of the love of Christ to the Soul are the greatest goods, and therefore should make the greatest impressions upon us. They are goods, not suited to the Souls irregular passions, but to its greatest wants. *Health, peace, success in business*, are things we call good, but

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their goodness lieth only in a suitableness they have to the wants of our outward man, what are any of these things to the Soul? the *loves* of Christ are suited to the wants of the Soul, and that not only considered as a reasonable being (so knowledge, and learning are also suited to the Souls wants, and all improvements of reason, or means in order to it) but to the wants of the Soul considered as an immortal being, capable of an eternal happiness. Nothing more becomes a reasonable Soul, then to put a due rate and value upon things, and to prefer what is truly preferrible.

2. This is one great reason of the Lords works, *That he might be remembred for, and by them.* God indeed in his gracious influences aims at the supply of the Soul, as to what it needeth, but he hath an higher end then this, *viz. his own glory*, the glory of his goodness, truth, and faithfulness, *Psal.* 111. 4. *He hath made his wonderful works to be remembred.* It is a complement we sometimes use with our Friends, when we make them presents, and give them gifts, we say we do it, that they might have something to remember us by. God in the dispensations of his grace and mercy, is often in Scripture said, *to remember* his Covenant, his *word*, his *holy promise*, and he expecteth that when we receive any such favours, we should *remember* his loves, and remember our Covenants and Vows, so as that Man or Woman that doth not remember the loves of Christ, doth not answer Gods ends in the manifestations of his love to us, nor the expectation which God upon that account hath upon us. I shall apply this discourse,

1. *By reflecting upon the most of Christians* for their not living up to this duty. 2. By persuading to the revived practice of it. Do the most of Christians (such I mean as are so called) *remember the loves of Christ more then Wine? What means when the most of peoples never looking after a particular share, or interest in them.* The love of Christ (considered in itself) is nothing else but his *good will to the Children of Men*, this was evidenced in his not taking upon him the *nature of Angels*, but the *nature of the Seed of Abraham*, in his *dying upon the Cross for us*, the *publication of his Gospel to us*, the committing of the *word of reconciliation to* his Ministers, who are sent out as the *Ambassadours of Christ*, intreating men to be *reconciled unto God.* Do men remember this love more then Wine, who *reject* this counsel of God? Use 1.

God for their salvation, who trample this blood under foot, and do despight to the covenant of Grace, and all this, for what comes under no better notion than this of *Wine*, either things *pleasant*, or *things profitable*, either the satisfaction of their lusts, or the filling of their Coffers. The world is full, either of such as are excessive *drinkers of Wine, or Merchants for it*, but how thin is it of such as have any remembrance of Christs love? who as the *Apostle* tells us, died to redeem us from our *vain conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 18. *For we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold from our vain conversation — but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish*; who can be said to *remember Christs love more then Wine*, that lives in those sins which crucified him, who was the Lord of life? Yet is not this the course of the most Men and Women, who never think of their *dying Saviour*, to restrain them in their drunkennesses, debaucheries, in their greatest excesses of Riot? Nay, how many are there that seldom take the love of Christ into their thoughts, the love of their cups, and of their Harlots, hath made Christs loves to be utterly forgotten by their Souls; for how can they say that they remember *Christs loves* above their lusts, that will not quench one lust for his sake, they in whom the remembrance of *Christs death* will not extinguish one vile affection, one spark of pleasing lust, will not the most of men, and women, yea, such, in whose ears the loves of Christ are published every Lords day, be found perishing for preferring the very *lees, and dregs of Wine*, before the loves of Christ? I mean for preferring the basest, and most sordid kind of pleasures, and satisfactions of the flesh (for such are those pleasures which are no more than the gratifying of the sensitive appetite.)

2. *Do not most mens discourses and practice betray them to remember Wine*, I mean their *profitable things* before the loves of Christ? How much is the world, and the things of the world, the discourse of all companies upon all occasions; how few are the discourses concerning Christ, and what he hath done for us? an hours discourse of Christs loves in a Pulpit upon the Lords day, is thought proportionable to six days discourse about our earthly occasions; do we not even grudge the Lord a seventh part of our time for the remembrances of his loves? the Lords day is a day *to call to remembrance Christs loves*. It was the day of his resurrection, by which he compleated mans redemption,

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the Ministers work is to help us in our remembrance of his loves. We have besides our attendance upon the publick ministry, a private duty this day incumbent upon us, *viz. To remember him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification.* I beseech you consider whether your *remembrings of Christs loves* upon the Sabbath day, bear any proportion to your remembrance of your worldly intereſts other days. I mean not for the proportion of time spent in the one and the other; God hath indulged our infirmity in that, he hath set apart a seventh day only to himself; but examine this, whether you *remember the loves of Christ on the Lords day, as you remember your worldly concerns on any of the other six days*; do the loves of Christ come into your thoughts, as much on the week day, as the world comes into your thoughts on the Lords days? I fear there is none of us all can say, that in this thing our hearts are clean; I hope I speak to many who remember the loves of Christ, and will never suffer his dying love to go off their thoughts. But when we come to these comparative examinations, to enquire whether we remember his loves, more then we remember our sensual, or sensible objects; ah, how short do we come of the duty of Christians, yea, of what our selves will own, and confess to be our duty? *Happy is that man that doth not condemn himself, even in the thing which he alloweth to be his duty.*

But I had rather spend my time in persuading my self, and you to our duty, which according to my explication of the text and this proposition will lye much in two things 1. *In a full and perfect remembrance of the Loves of Christ.* 2. *In a remembrance of them proportionable to that degree of goodness and excellency in them.* I say, first in a Scriptural remembrance a full and perfect remembrance of the Loves of Christ. I am afraid that we satisfy our selves too much in a *Notional* formal *remembrance of Christs Loves* and so please our selves, in hearing the Gospel read, opened, and applyed to our Souls, in a formal keeping of the *Lords day* (the day which God hath set apart for us to call to our minds all the acts of our redemption compleated in his resurrection) some Churches aware of Peoples awkness to this Spiritual duty, have thought fit to appoint other days for a more solemn remembrance of his *incarnation*, and *death*. Nor have I any thing to say against any Christians that will set apart any Special times to remember any Loves of Christ (though I do not know that Christ hath left any power to his Church to impose particular

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times of this nature.) But alas! this is the least part of our duty in *the remembrance of his Love*. We may have a day to remember it in (we have such a day every week) we may have helps to remember it by. The holy Scriptures, the Ministers of the Gospel that Preach Christ to their People are such helps. But if in these days, if with these helps, we do not set our selves to meditate of the *Loves of Christ*, to turn our thoughts from other things, to the contemplation of, and meditation upon the Love of a *Christ incarnate*, the Love of a Christ dying, and riseing again from the dead, if we do not study to get our hearts affected suitably to such Love, with love, faith, hope, *&c.* we do not so live as a People that remember Christ died for our Sins, declining whatsoever is contrary to his will, and Law in the Gospel, do what in us lyeth to promove his honour & Glory, we are so far from Satisfying our Duty by this formal remembrance of his Love, that we are the greatest *forgetters of his Love*. The Jews who never owned him as their Redeemer, the Heathen who never heard of his name, nor of what he was or did for Sinners can in no propriety of Speech be said to *forget his Loves*. The Christian only, the *loose Christian*, the *formal* Christian, he who hears every day of the dying Love of Christ, yet goes on to defy him, to crucify him afresh, and to put him to open shame, or he who every Lords day hears the sound of the *Loves* of *Christ*, and reads of it, yet never meditates upon it, never suffers his soul by contemplation to pierce into the heights, or sound the depths of it, whose heart is never truly affected with it so as he hath any Love kindled in his soul towards Christ, no breathings after him, who exerciseth no faith, no hope in him; he that lives not in his measure up to it, leaving his vain conversation, worshiping God in the Spirit, rejoycing in him, living up in a close obedience to his Law; this is the man that forgetteth the Loves of Christ. But yet if there be a Soul that hath experienced the Loves of Christ in a particular application to it self, that hath given it self a liberty to the flesh, and walked in a contrary course to what the Law of Christ requireth, this Soul yet more forgets his Loves, because he had a deeper impression of them upon his heart; the Love of Christ made an impression only upon the others Ears, but it hath entred into this man's Soul. He is the greatest forgetter of his Love. You shall observe in holy Writ, that all sin is expresst under the notion of *forgetting God*, *Psal.* 50. 22. and in a multitude of other Texts, and this not only because a *forgetting of God* is the cause of all

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the Violations of his Law, which we could not violate, if we remembred God as we ought to do; but because indeed all sin *in God's account is an actual forgetting of him*, God accounts us to know, to remember no more than we are affected with, and live up unto. Therefore Christians, let us make it our business not only to call to mind the Loves of Christ, but to remember them in that sense which God calleth a remembrance of them.

2. Let us not satisfie our selves with a bare *remembrance of his Loves*, but labour to *remember them more than Wine*; more than the most sweet and pleasant, the most gainful and profitable things which this world affords. Think that you hear Christ speaking in your Ears, in the language in which he once spake to *Peter*, setting all the pleasant and gainful things in the world before you, and then saying to you, Christians! *Love you me more than these?* Let me shew you the reasonableness of this.

1. Consider, if thou canst not say so, *Thou dost not answer the Loves of Christ in any degree.* I am now speaking to such as are *Christians* not in name and profession only, but *in deed and in truth.* Such a one may suppose all the *fallen Angels*, under Christ's Eye, even those Legions in the Air, and in the bottomless Pit, Creatures in their Original more perfect and glorious than man, but fallen from their first Integrity, and think he heareth Christ saying to him, *Poor Soul! I have loved thee more than all these.* I died not for these, I died for thee; I took not upon me the Nature of Angels, but the Nature of the seed of *Abraham.*

2. He may suppose all the Heathen Nations under Christ's Eye. The great *Emperours* of *Turkey*, *Persia*, *China*, and other parts of the world, with the millions of Souls under their jurisdiction, and think that he heareth Christ again saying to him, *Poor Soul! I have loved thee more than these.* Thou heareſt my Gospel Read and Preached every Lord's Day; hast thou not seen? hast thou not heard? These great Nations of the world, and all the great Rulers of them, never heard the joyful sound; I was never Preached in their Streets; they were never wooed, never intreated to come to me that they might have life. *I have loved thee more than these.* Further yet, thou mayest fancy all the *prophane men*, all the sensual and carnal men, all *Hypocrites*, all *unregenerate men*, whose hearts are yet locked up under unbelief, under Christ's and thy Eye, and suppose that thou heareſt thy great Lord and Saviour saying to thee, *Poor Chri-*

stian! *I have loved thee more than all these.* They are yet wallowing in their native blood, as thou wert before I passed by thee in *my time of love, and said unto thee live*; they are yet Children of wrath, in an hourly danger of having it come upon them to the utmost; I have plucked thee out of *Sodom*: Thy heart by nature was as hard as theirs, as much prejudiced against thy own salvation; I have made thee to differ. *I have loved thee more than all these.* May I rise one step higher to commend the Love of Christ to thy *remembrance*, thou mayest fancy all that *glory* which Christ had with his Father from before the beginning of the world; all the blessed company of Heaven; all the riches of Christ's glory and felicity, before his and thy Eye, and fancy that thou hearest Christ say to thee, *My poor creature*, I have in a *sense*, and *for a time loved thee more than these*: I left my Father's Throne, and right Hand, him whom I was always before, brought up with him, I left all to come down from Heaven to Earth, to take thy flesh, to be born of a Virgin, and to be laid in a Manger, to live a poor and contemned life in the world, to die a shameful and ignominious death, and all this to purchase for thee Eternal Life and Salvation, and to redeem thee from thy vain conversation. *Have I not loved thee more than these?* What doth the Apostle say less than this, when he saith, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that you through his poverty might be made rich.* In what degree then canst thou be said to answer the Loves of Christ, if when there is set before thee no more than *the pleasures of sin which are but for a season*, the *profits* and *enjoyments* of this life, which thou canst have no more than a Lease for Life of; if thou canst not say, Yea Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that *I remember thy Love more than these.* Either this intoxicating Wine of sinful lusts and pleasures, how gratifying soever they be to my fleshly appetite: or this pleasant and gainful Wine of worldly Riches, Estate, Honour, Preferment, *&c.* Oh that Christians would think of this!

2. The second Consideration is yet more dreadful, *viz. He is not worthy of the Loves of Christ, who doth not remember them more than Wine.* What Christ sometimes said of *Love*, is as true concerning this remembrance of his Loves, which is an act of Love, *Matth.* 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than*

than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And what he saith there of natural Relations, is doubtless as true concerning sensible Enjoyments in this world, *Riches* and *Honours*, &c. which are objects of your love, much beneath reasonable creatures in nearest relation to us. It is certainly as true, That man or woman that remembers any sensible Enjoyment, and is more affected with it, than the Loves of Christ, is not worthy of his Loves. Certainly nothing more becometh us who pretend to be creatures endued with reason, than to value things according to their measure, and their true and just valuation. You will say he is not worthy of a Jewel of great price, that valueth a Pebble before it. And by the way, this will be enough to convince us all, that *we are saved by Grace*, and have what Love we have from Christ freely. For who is not guilty of a great Errour in this particular. We think of sensible things more than of the Loves of Christ; they are more the objects of our meditations, the subjects of our discourses, and the marks of our actions. It is well for us that our Salvation doth not depend upon the perfection of our gracious acts, and that we have another Righteousness, than that of our own to appear in before God. That when our Consciences check us in this particular, and tell us that we do not remember Christ's Loves more than Wine; yet the Gospel relieveth us, by telling us that he was made of God *for us* Righteousness, and we can remember that this Christ (whose Loves we should remember after a better manner than we do) is the *Lord our Righteousness*, an *High Priest* that can have compassion on our infirmities, he in whom we are compleat. But yet neither will this relieve us, unless we *humble* our selves before God for our failures in this particular. Fly to him for pardon, and endeavour even in this thing to perfect holiness; and that bringeth me to the last thing I have to do, *viz.* To offer you my Advice in order to the bringing up of your hearts to this just valuation and remembrance of these Loves of Christ.

1. Labour to *understand them*. We can meditate upon nothing, but what we have some notion of, we can remember nothing but what we have had some notion of. There are the *loves of God*, and *the loves of Christ*, indeed the loves of Christ, are the loves of him who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father, who is God over all, blessed for ever; but by the loves

of Christ, I mean the kindness which floweth to us, from Christ as *God-man*, united in one Person as our Mediator. There is a love and kindness which floweth to us from the providence of God, working either more generally, and extending to all, or more *specially* towards some. There is also a love and kindness, which floweth from Christ as our *Redeemer, Mediator, Saviour*. Both these loves are to be remembred, but the latter more especially are called the loves of Christ; understand the *loves of God* in the effluxes of his good providence. More especially *understand* the loves of Christ as the Saviour of Man: there are also some of these more *common* to others, some more *special to some*. Of the first sort are the *Gospel*, and the *publication of it to us*; of the latter sort are those *effects of grace* which are wrought in us, in the *justification of our Souls*, the *change of our hearts*, the renovation of our natures, the strengthenings, quicknings, and consolations of the Spirit of Christ. Labour to understand all your good things, as coming from the hand of God, and to understand the kindness of God in them, see your good things as mercies, as Divine gifts, and then study them;

1. In the *suitableness of them to your States*. In this lies the nature of all good; from this must be judged the degrees and measures of good that are in every grateful thing.

2. In the *freeness of them*; Freeness is indeed of the nature of grace; take away *freeness*, and you take away the nature of grace, which must flow freely without any merit in the creature, or it is no more grace but debt; no more love but justice. If you understand not Christ's Loves, it is impossible you should duly remember them.

2. *Labour for to find the experience of the Loves of Christ, in the best, and most salvifick manifestations.* There is a love of God seen in giving us our *Wine*) for it is God that *gives us our Corn, and Wine, and Oil, and multiplies our Silver and Gold*. We must look for higher things then these, or else it is impossible we should remember them more then these. The best manifestations of love must be discerned in the giving us those things which more suit our state, and are suitable to greater wants. Neither shall we effectually remember these, till we find we have a *propriety* in them. You will upon experience in all things find, that it is *propriety* which gives us the *sweetness* in any good thing. Suppose a brave and noble House or Estate, we may look upon

Hos. 2. 11.

upon it, and admire it, and it may please us, but it is propriety in such an estate that must make it sweet, and pleasant to us. We may have a kind of love for a Prince, of whom we hear, that he is *just and merciful*, and endowed with many other qualities acceptable to humane nature, but we shall not much delight in him, nor remember his love, until our selves have in some measure tasted, and experienced it, an interest, and property in the love of another, that is it which gives it an impression upon our Souls; God hath commended his love to the world, in sending Christ to die for sinners, Christ hath commended his love to them, in coming into the world, and dying for them, not for all, but for those that shall believe in him; men may talk of this love of Christ, and use their *Rhetorick* a little about it, in the magnifying of it, but till their own Souls come to be *washed with this blood*, till they come to have their iniquities forgiven, and their sins covered, it is not to be expected that his love should affect them much, or sink any thing deep into their Souls, so as to be revived by any effectual remembrance.

3. Would you remember the loves of Christ as you ought to do, *more then Wine*; Set then your selves, sometimes for *soliloquy, and meditation*. When the Sound of the Gospel passeth into our ears, we receive a little of it, but transient things affect not much, nor leave any great impressions upon us. *Meditation* upon a Subject is the Souls standing, and dwelling upon it, it is like the digestion of our food, there is nothing can be conceived, a more rational means to affect the Soul with any thing, or to make it fit for the memory to reflect upon, then *meditation*. One great reason why we remember the loves of Christ no better, nor more, is because we are not at leisure; our heads are so unreasonably full of worldly cares, and employments, the cares of the world so choke, and fill up our thoughts, that we have no leisure to meditate, or stand upon the thoughts of Christs loves, or any spiritual objects. Would Christians allow themselves more time to fix their thoughts upon spiritual objects, to pierce into the depths of divine love, to consider what Christ hath done for them in particular, they would better remember them.

4. *Take heed of any wilful sinnings against his love.* Sinning (as I told you before) is usually set out in Scripture, under the notion of a *forgetting God*, and forgetting his loves, *Psal.* 78. 11.

Psal.

Psal. 106. 13, 21. the committing of sin frequently, is like the continual dropping of water upon a thing, which washeth, and weareth out impressions upon it. Besides it is natural to us, not to desire, or to be willing to remember the kindness of a friend, whose kindness we have abused. Sin puts the tast of Christs love out of the Soul. A remembrance of Christs love, so as to be in any measure duly affected with it, is incompetent with wilful and presumptuous sinning. None but the holy, and heavenly Soul remembreth the loves of Christ.

5. Lastly, *Wait upon God in ordinances, in hearing the Word, in the Holy Sacrament of his Supper.* The ordinances of the Gospel are not only *means of grace*, but *great helps to Christians* memory, as to Christs loves; we preach a *Christ crucified*, there his loves come to our ears, in the Supper you have a representation of a Christ crucified, there his loves, his dying love is set before your *Eyes*, both are helps to the mind of that man or woman, who desireth to feed his thoughts upon the loves of Christ. But to shut up all, *Pray*, that is a general prescription in order to the obtaining of any mercy from the hand of God, amongst other blessed effects of the holy Spirit of God, promised by Christ to his Disciples, this was one, *John* 14. 26. *He shall bring to your remembrance the things which you have heard of me*, it is the influence of the Spirit of grace, that quickneth, and inableth us to bring Christs love to our remembrance, our Saviour hath taught us how to obtain this blessed remembrancer, *Luke* 11. 13. *He giveth his holy Spirit to them that ask him.*

Sermon

Sermon XXX.

Cant. 1. 4.

The Upright love thee. Or Heb. *Uprightnesses love thee.*

STill it is the Spouse that speaketh. She had prayed, *Draw me*, and promised, that being drawn, both she and others would *run after Christ*. She had received a gracious *answer* to her *prayer*. *The King had brought her into his Chambers*. In this she hath *Triumphed*, *We will be glad, and rejoice in thee*. For this she hath covenanted that she would *remember the Loves of her Beloved, more then all the pleasant, or profitable things in the world*, Which she expresseth under the Metaphoricall notion of *Wine*. Now lest any should say to her, Why so fond (O thou fairest amongst women?) to justify her self in this rapture of Joy, this extacy of love she may be conceived to add these words. *The upright love thee*, or as the *Hebrew* is, *Uprightnesses love thee* the words may be variously rendred with consistency enough to the Grammar of the Hebrew text.

1. *Uprightnesses* [or right *things*] *love thee*. The Same word is used *Psal.* 17. 2. *Thine eyes shall behold right things* מישרים comes from ישר to be right, or to appear so. The word is used in the form that it is here, *Psal.* 9. 9. He shall judge the World in righteousness and the People במישרים in uprightnesses. It is used *Prov.* 1. 3. *Is.* 33. 15. *Prov.* 2. 9. *Psal.* 75. 2. If we expound the phrase (as it is literally) according to the abstract, Righteousnesses, or Right things, the Question will be whether it should be read as in the Nominative case, *Uprightnesses love thee*, or as in the *Oblique case* (which the *Heb.* prefix ל seems to import) In *Uprightnesses they love thee*, accordingly the sense will be very different, for if we read it, as in the *Nominative case*, the import of it seems to be, to set out the *Excellency* of her beloved as he who was the very *seat* of all excellent things, in whom did all *fulness dwell*, even the fulness of the *God-head*, all righteousness, all Equity, whatsoever is good. If we read it as in the *Ablative case* (as the prefix in the *Hebrew* seemeth

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to guide us) The import of it seems to be to express to us the nature of the Saints love to God, which is not in *word*, or *in tongue onely*, but *in deed*, and in *truth*, in *uprightnesses*, that is (as *Buxtorf* expoundeth it) *Rectissimè, fortiter*, most intirely, intensely *sincerely*, thus I say it denoteth the truth, and reality of the believing Souls love to Christ.

2. But our translators have thought fit to translate it otherwise conceiving the *abstract* here put for the concrete, *Uprightnesses*, for *upright men* possessed of uprightness, this is very usual in the *Hebrew* dialect, and indeed in most languages; so the sense is this: Do not wonder, that *I love Christ*, and am so affected, with the injoyment of him, there is never an upright Soul in the world but loves him, all upright Souls love him; Thus the Proposition is plain.

Propos. Upright Souls love Christ. To this I shall Speak in my ordinary method by *Explication, Confirmation,* & *Application.* Under the first, I shall give you the true notion of *Uprightness* and an Upright soul, & shew you in what sense the Proposition is true.

The Question may well be propounded, Who is the *upright*, who is the *righteous man*? For the Psalmist tells us, & the Apostle, *Rom.* 3. confirmeth it, *There is none righteous, no not one*, and although God at first made man upright *Eccles.* 7. 29. Yet the world is so warped, by men seeking out to themselves inventions, that the prophet *Micah*, 7. 2. Tells us, *there is none upright amongst men.* To resolve this difficulty, I shall first give you two or three distinctions concerning *righteousness*, or *uprightness*, without which we shall hardly understand the true notion of an upright man.

1. There is an *uprightness of heart*. *Psal.* 32. 11. *Shout for joy all you upright in heart*; so *Psal.* 94. 11. Judgment shall return unto *righteousness*, and all the *upright in heart* shall follow it. And there is an *uprightness of way* or conversation *Prov.* 29. 27. *The upright in his way is an abomination*; for *Psal.* 37. 14. The wicked man seeketh to slay *such as be of upright conversation.* Indeed it is true, there is no man, who is *upright in his heart*, but he will also be *upright in his way*, for *the upright directeth his way*, *Prov.* 21. 29. but there is a seeming uprightness of way, when the heart is not upright with God. *Prov.* 14. 12. *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* The Proposition must be understood of such as are upright not in their way only seemingly, but both in heart and in way.

2. Secondly

2. Secondly there is a *Legal*, and there is an *Evangelical righteousness or uprightness*. The legal *righteousness*, or *uprightness* lyeth in a *full* and *perfect conformity to the Law of God*. In this sense it is as true, *That there is none righteous, no not one*, none *upright amongst men*, as that there is none who liveth, and sinneth not against God, for the least Flye maketh this box of ointment to stink; all Sin is crookedness, and the least crookedness spoileth this rightness. But then there is an *Evangelical righteousness, and uprightness*, and thus every Soul, that is *justified* by grace *through* the imputation *of Christs righteousness is a righteous Soul*; and every Soul that is *Sanctifyed* and *renewed*, the *bent* of which is towards God, and whose heart is sincere before God, is an upright and righteous Soul. In this Sense, the *upright heart* is the *Sincere heart*. Thus *David* saith of himself, I *was upright before him*, 2 *Sam.* 22. 24. And God saith of Job, *He is a perfect, and an upright man*. The Proposition must be understood of the latter, he that is *Evangelically righteous*, or *upright*; for there are none of the former upon the Earth, none that are *legally righteous*.

3. Thirdly. As there are degrees of *Sanctification*, so there are *degrees of uprightness*. The text seems to speak of the highest degrees, *Uprightnesses*. It is very ordinary with the Hebrew to express the *Superlative* degree, by the *plural number*; besides this is Signified by putting the Abstract for the *Concrete*, we usually call men notoriously vile and wicked, by the Abstract names of vice, and persons eminently good and virtuous, by the Abstract Names of virtue and goodness. Those that are highest in grace, & who do most excel in holiness are fullest of love to Christ. Love teacheth every Child of God, the weakest *babe in grace* to *cry* after Christ, and the grown Christian to delight in him, and to *walk* up *and down in his name*. Every righteous, every upright Soul loveth Christ, and that with a true, sincere love, though not in an equal degree, she (saith our Saviour) *who* hath much forgiven will *love much*. Having premised these distinctions, let me a little further inquire into the true Notion of these upright men, upright by this *Evangelical* rectitude.

In short they are such as are *justified*, and *Sanctified*, made righteous through Christs righteousness imputed to them, & holy, through the *Sanctification of his Spirit*. 1. Such as are *justified*. This is the first thing requisite to an *upright*, right man, let the unjustified Soul, be what it will, do what it can, it cannot be upright, either in *heart* or *way*. Suppose a stick naturally crooked, you may pare it and

paint, and colour it, and cover its crookedneſs alittle, but until it hath been in the fire, and bended right, it will be crooked ſtill; the natural man, the Soul not juſtified by grace, not waſhed with the blood of Chriſt may be pared by education, and brought off from ſome flagitious, and enormous practices, he may be coloured, and painted over by ſome acts of moral vertue, and ſome formal performances of religious duties, but ſtill in Gods Eye the Soul is a crooked Soul, until the Lord hath made it right, till it be juſtified by faith. 2. To this uprightneſs is required not only *juſtification*, or the removal of the Souls guilt, and imputation of a righteouſneſs, *a perfect righteouſneſs, but the ſanctification of the heart*, God never ſanctifieth any, whom he doth not juſtify, hence no Soul can be ſaid to be an upright Soul, that is not juſtified, nor doth the Lord at any time juſtify a Soul, but he at the ſame time alſo reneweth, and ſanctifieth it; hence the upright Soul muſt be a renewed, Sanctified Soul. But yet in regard our *regeneration*, and ſanctification, is not as to degrees *perfect*, (though as to parts Divines ſay it is, that is, the whole man is renewed) it may be yet worthy to be inquired from what degrees of *Regeneration*, and Sanctification, a man may be denominated an *upright man*; the rectitude of any thing is to be judged from its conformity to ſome rule. The rule of mans *uprightneſs* is the Lords Statutes, which are *right*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 19. 8. *holy*, and *ſpiritual*, and *juſt*, and *good*, Rom. 7. *Thy judgments are right*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 119. 75. 128. It is ſaid ſo of nothing elſe, ſo as from a conformity to this rule, muſt *rightneſs*, or *uprightneſs* be judged. And thus,

1. There is an *uprightneſs of judgment, when the Soul judgeth according to truth*, both concerning *notions*, and *practises*, when it judgeth aright concerning *truth*, and is not warped by *error*, and when it judgeth aright concerning the ways of God, then the Soul is *upright*, with reſpect to the *underſtanding and judgment*.

2. There is an *uprightneſs of the whole Soul*, with reſpect to the *ſcope* and *bent of it*, when the heart of man doth not ſtand inclined, and bent to ſin, but the Soul can ſay with *David*, *I hate vain thoughts; but thy law do I love, I hate every falſe way*, &c. The man that in all his actions, deſigneth, and intendeth the honour and glory of God, and obedience to his will, though in many things he cometh ſhort, and offendeth, yet this man is an *upright* man, his end, and general ſcope is right.

3. There

3. There is an *uprightneſs of will*, in this the *uprightneſs of a mans intention* diſcovereth itſelf, when *to will is preſent with the Soul*, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Rom.* 7. Though he wanteth a ſtrength to perform; the man or woman in heart willeth the honour and glory of God, and this not by *fits*, but ſteadily, and certainly, and is really unwilling to do any thing by which God may be diſhonoured, though through ignorance he may offend, and through a natural impotency, not being able to love the Lord with all his *heart*, and ſtrength, yea, and through moral impotency, and a mixt infirmity, through the great power of temptations, whether from the ſeduction of luſt, or the violent motions, and impreſſions of Satan.

4. There is an *uprightneſs of action*, which lieth *in a true, and ſincere endeavour to do the will of God*, and by this both the uprightneſs of intention, and will alſo is to be judged. This is the upright man, though he may ſtumble and fall, and oft doth fail (*who liveth, and ſinneth not againſt God?*) And as theſe holy diſpoſitions are found in the Soul in more remiſs, or intenſe degrees, ſo the Soul is more or leſs upright, and the man deſerves this honourable denomination leſs or more. Theſe now are the Souls that *love Chriſt*.

To love any object, whether perſon, or thing, ſignifieth to take a *delight, and complacency in it*. Whether in *the thoughts of it* (if abſent) as the Apoſtle ſaith, whom we having not ſeen, yet love, or in the *contemplation*, and *fruition* in *converſe*, and communion with it, if more preſent.

This Prædicate concerning the *upright*, that they love Chriſt, is to be underſtood *excluſively*, and *incluſively*, concerning the *Perſon of Chriſt*, and whatſoever beareth his *image*, and *ſuperſcription*.

1. *Excluſively, theſe, and none but theſe love him.* Others may talk of *loving Chriſt*, but it is but a talk and pretence, they love but in word, and tongue only, not in deed, and truth, there is ſomething elſe, either luſt or the world, ſomething or other that hath more of their affection, more of their heart then Chriſt hath.

2. *Incluſively. Theſe, and all theſe love Chriſt*, there is not an upright Soul in the world but loves Chriſt, and takes a pleaſure & complacency in him, and preferreth him before his chief joy.

3. They *love the perſon of Chriſt*. He is in their Eyes *altoge-*

ther desires, the chiefest of ten thousand. there is nothing in the world so sweet, and pleasant to their thoughts, as to think of *Jesus of Nazareth*, him that was incarnate of the Virgin, that died upon the cross for sinners; all their contemplations, and meditations of him, are exceeding sweet, and their hearts exercised about them melt in them.

4. They love *whatsoever bears the image, and superscription of Christ.* The Gospel, that gives them the history of Christ, and revealeth to them his will, the *ordinances of Christ*, in which the loves of Christ are set forth, represented, opened, applied to the Souls of people. *The members of Christ*, even every Soul in which they can but see *aliquid Christi* (as *Bucer* speaks) any thing of the features of Christ. This is enough to have spoken for the explication of the *Proposition.* For the proof of it,

1. Look into the Word of God, see if you can find an instance either of an *upright man*, who did not love Christ, or of an *hypocrite*, or unregenerate man that did love him. *Abraham believed*, and it *was imputed to him for righteousness*, he was one that walked with God, and was *perfect*, that is, upright, he loved Christ. Our Lord saith of him, *Abraham saw my day and rejoyced. Simon*, and *Anna*, and *Peter*, and *Mary Magdalene*, all were upright Persons, they all loved Christ. On the other side there is not so much as one instance of an unjustified, unregenerate Soul, that had any real love for Christ, no not when they saw him here in the flesh. It is said of the young Pharisee, who came to our Saviour, *Mat.* 19. that when Christ saw him, *he loved him*, but he had no love for Christ, for when he bid him *go sell all that he had, and he should have treasures in Heaven*, it is said he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. *Judas* followed Christ, and so did the *Capernaites*, but *Judas* carried the bag, and the *Capernaites* followed him for the *loaves.* None of them loved Christ in *sincerity* and *truth.* We need no other instances then what our own age affordeth us. But we need no Scripture in this case. Reason will evince the necessary truth of this Proposition, if we consider, that all love is founded, either, 1. *In the apprehended goodness and excellency of the object beloved*: Or, 2. *In some similitude, and likeness*, &c. Or 3. *From some instinct, of which we can give no very just account.* I will begin with the last first.

1. *Love* to another often proceeds from some *inaccountable instinct*;

instinct; we see this very ordinary amongst us, the heart of a woman cleaveth to a man, or of a man to a woman, so the heart of one friend is knit to another, and we are able to give our selves no great account of it, the man loveth the woman, to whom he had a former aversion, and the woman loveth, and chuseth the man for her Husband, that she did never think of, and they can give themselves no account of the change which they find in themselves, this is undoubtedly a *providential instinct* or *influence*, of which we can give no account. The Souls *love to Christ*, also floweth from an instinct of God, an influence of special grace, for certainly if we must be taught of God, to love one another, to love the brethren, whom we have seen, and daily do see, and much that is lovely in them, we have much more need to be taught of God to *love Christ*, whom we have not seen, and whose excellency, and amiableness, is only matter of faith to us. Hence it appeareth, that no unrenewed, no unsanctified heart, none but the upright Soul can possibly love the Lord Jesus Christ, for this love is no *natural habit*, no man by nature loveth Christ, nor is it any acquired habit, but an infused habit, and indeed a piece of regeneration.

2. *Love* to an object is *founded in an apprehension of some goodness and excellency in that object*, we cannot love any object, that appeareth to us *evil*, or *unlovely*. Now none but the renewed, and regenerate Soul can possibly see any goodness and excellency in Christ, for it is spiritually discerned, besides, the reason of love in us to any object, is not so much the abstracted goodness, and excellency of the object, as its relative goodness unto us; now none but the Soul that is justified, and regenerate, Soul hath in any thing tasted of the love of God, or hath found him in any degree good as to it.

3. Lastly, Whereas *love is founded in likeness*, in some similitude of nature, or disposition, and qualities, there is such a dissimilitude between a natural man, whether he be one that is *profane* and *flagitious*, or meerly *moral*, and *formal*, and *hypocritical*, that this Soul cannot love the Lord Jesus Christ, who is holy, and harmless, and separate from sinners; and the very same reasons make it necessary for every Soul to love Christ, for every such Soul is renewed, and regenerate, and taught of God to love the Lord Jesus Christ, every such Soul is beloved of him, and under some apprehensions, and experience of the love of

God

God in Christ unto it; every such Soul (finally) hath the Image of God renewed in it, in righteousness and holiness, and by grace wrought up into a conformity to Christ, and the more upright the Soul is, the more is the image of God renewed in it, the more it hath tasted the special love of Christ, the more it hath received of the potent influences of Divine Grace, hence it must needs love Christ more. I now come to the application.

Use 1. In the first place, This may let us know, *That Christ is a most excelling object, and the non-adherence* of our hearts to him, is a piece of the *natural crookedness, and defection of the Soul of man.* The goodness or excellency of an object is not to be determined from a vulgar judgment. *Learning* is an excellent thing, the foolish ignorant person doth not so judge it, nor look after it, this detracts nothing from the excellency of it. Wise men value it. It hath no enemies but the ignorant man. Now the judgment of the best and wiser part of the world, their value, and prizing of it, is enough to commend it, though *fools hate knowledge.* So the *upright mans loving Christ,* is a sufficient evidence of the transcendent goodness, and excellency that is in him, tho the loose, and profane man, the formal, hypocritical man hath no love at all for him. There are thousands in the world (in the Christian world) whose conversations testify, that they can see no beauty, no excellency in Christ at all, to them he grows up *as a root out of a dry ground, in their Eyes he hath no beauty, no comeliness at all.* They stand, and admire what sweetness Gods people have in their meditations, and contemplations of him, what is that sometimes makes them so *sick of love for him, so breaking with longings after him* (as holy *David* expresseth it.) The business is not what fools judge of Wisdom in the mean time, *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* It is enough that the *upright love him.* The upright men, are the best men in the world. But you will say, were there such a beauty, such an excellency in Christ, why should not every rational man enquire after him, and love him? The answer is easy. Because his beauty, his excellency is not obvious to the *Eye of sense,* or to the *Eye of reason,* working from its own principles, but only to the *Eye of faith,* & that of *reason,* working upon *revealed principles.* The goodness & excellency of Christ considered as *Mediator,* doth not lie in a suitableness to our *bodily wants,* no nor to the wants of our Souls, considered only as rational *and spiritual Beings,* but in his suitableness to our

Souls

Souls considered as *lapsed*, and fallen from the happy state wherein they were at first created, and by that fall exposed to the wrath of God, here, and hereafter. Now this is revealed only in Holy Writ, and is to be discerned only by the Eye of faith. So as those who do not by a firm and steady assent, agree to the *revelation of the word*, cannot possibly see any excellency in Christ as a Saviour, and Mediator between God and Man.

Use. 2. Secondly, *Every gracious Soul is from this Proposition justified in all their pangs of love for, and toward Christ, and in all their actions, and sufferings in evidence of this love.* That there is such a thing as a *spiritual love sickness* is evident to all those who know any thing of the ways of God with the Soul, or the motions of the Soul toward God: Let persons of atheistical, and profane hearts mock so long as they please; no Soul that I know of, expresseth more of this nature, then his who is stiled by God, the man according to Gods own heart, *Psal.* 119. 20. *My heart breaketh with the longings, which it hath to thy judgments at all times*, Psal. 42. 1. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God, my Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*, Psal. 63. 1. *My Soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee.* Our Saviour I am sure blesseth those who *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, *Mat.* 5. (what work would the unhallowed wits of our Age have made with such metaphors as these in their *Books of drollery*, &c.) they are all expressive of those pangs of love that sometimes affect good Christians in the several states of their Souls, and besides these more inward motions, the Souls of good Christians cannot but express their love, by a zeal for his glory, a love to his institutions, a regard to all his commandments, and durst not do many things (as to which their Neighbours find no difficulty) because they love the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath said, *If you love me, keep my Commandments.* For Christ, that they may shew their love by their obedience unto him, they are ready to *suffer the loss of all things, yea, and do count them but dung, that they may win Christ*; for this the men of the world mock them, let them mock on; *The upright love him.* I remember in the story of *David*, we read, 2 *Sam.* 6. 20. That *Michal*, his Wife (the Daughter of *Saul*) mocked him, for his dancing before the Ark in a linnen Ephod. *How glorious* (saith she) *was the King of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day, in the Eyes of the handmaids.*

maids of his Servants, as one of the vain fellows, shamelesly uncovereth himself. The holy man gives her a very smart answer; saith he, *It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy Father, to appoint me to be a ruler over the people of the Lord, over* Israel, *therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile then thus,* &c. Whiles carnal men mock at the secret sighings, and groanings of Gods people, at their frequency, and strictness at, in, or to religious duties, and call it all *whining, and canting,* and what comes next to the end of their lewd Tongues, the Child of God is justified in this, that *the upright love Christ,* and all these their expressions of love are for, and towards him who hath *chosen* their Souls to *Eternal life,* and the use of all means which he hath made necessary in order to that Salvation, and who (for ought yet appeareth) hath passed over the Souls of these Scoffers, and left them to perish in their gainsayings. When *ch.* 5. of this Song, the Spouse chargeth the Daughters of *Hierusalem, that if they found her beloved, they should tell him she was sick of love:* They reply; *What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among Women, what is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?* Cant. 5. 8, 9. See into what an *elogy* of her beloved, she breaks out to the end of that *Chap. My beloved* (saith she) is *white* and *reddy, the chiefest of ten thousand,* &c. when the men of the world see a gracious Soul *panting, sighing,* and *breathing after Christ.* they are ready to speak to the same sense, tho in ruder language, what is the *beloved* of this Soul, more then anothers beloved; what makes these people so full of prayers, and tears, so full of duty, so fond of the ordinances of Christ? This justifies such Souls in all their pantings after Christ, in all the passions of their Souls for him, *The upright love him.*

Thirdly. From hence Christians may take measures of themselves, and make up a judgment of their Souls, whether they be upright Souls, yea, or no, very much lieth upon this, many are the promises that in Holy Writ we shall find made to *upright* Souls. *Perfection* of *degrees* is our mark, but what in this life we cannot attain unto, all perfection we are capable of, is *uprightness,* this may be attained, we are therefore highly concerned to inquire upon our *uprightness.* By this we shall know it; *The Soul that truly loveth Christ, that is an upright Soul,* so as that which we have to examine, is the truth of our love to Christ.

This

This inquiry also is considerable in respect of the Apostolical *Anathema*, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be* Anathema Maranatha. It is a great point, how a Christian shall certainly know his spiritual state? he shall know it by his *uprightness*? how shall he know his *uprightness*? that is to be known by his *love to Christ*. But will some say, is not this as hard to be discerned as any thing else? I answer; surely no. If it be no hard thing for a man to know whether he loves such a woman, or a woman to know that she loveth such a man, or for any to know they love such a friend, such a companion, why should it be so hard for a Soul to know whether it loveth Christ or no? love will work much in the same manner towards all its objects, and though the visibility, and sensibility of some objects, may draw out more of our passion, and excesses of affection, yet the *reality* and *truth* of our love may certainly be as well discerned towards a spiritual, and invisible object as to one, that is more the object of our exteriour senses, let us therefore try those measures, and see how we will make up our judgment of the truth of our love to a fellow creature; what is that which we call *love*, but the delight, and *complacency*, and *satisfaction of the Soul* in an object beloved, declared by the *pantings* and *breathings* of the heart after it, when absent, for an *union*, or *re-union* with it, the *acquiescence* and *meltings* of the heart upon it, when present, and an union with it is obtained, or apprehended; the Souls intercourse and communion with it, and free communications of its self unto it, its kindness to every person or thing, to whom, or which the object beloved, hath any relation, its patient, and pleasing bearing his reproofs, its readiness to go, or run, or do any thing at the will, and command of such a person, its standing up in the defence of him or her, its rising up against any that would do them injury, or that it hears speak reproachfully, or diminutively of him. It's readiness to suffer any thing for his sake, *&c.* Surely by some or all these notes we may try our love to Christ, and be as certain of it, as we can be of the sincerity of our love to any fellow creature; let me therefore desire you to propound these few questions to your selves.

1. *How far is Christ the object of thy thoughts?* We say, *ubi amor ibi oculus*, where *love* is, there the *Eye will be*, the reason of that is, because our thoughts are much imployed about the ob-

ject of our love, *where our treasure is* (saith our Saviour) *there will our hearts be also*, the *Psalmist* therefore speaking of the wicked man who hath no love for God, saith, *God is not in all his thoughts. Psal.* 10. 4. So long as we live in the world, the things of it are so much, and so continually the objects of our senses, that it is not to be expected, but that our thoughts should in a great measure be exercised about the things of it, so that I would not put the issue upon that, whether the *world* or *Christ* have most of our thoughts? but certainly Christ will be much in the thoughts of that Soul in whom the love of Christ is, *Te veniente die, te decedente canebat* (saith the *Poet* of the *lover*) the Soul that loveth Christ, will think of him in the evening when he *lieth down, and in the morning when he riseth up*, and *David* had his *waking thoughts* in the night season with God. God will not have all of the best mans thoughts, because he is but flesh, and hath some thoughts to take about what he shall eat, and drink, and put on, but God will have much of his thoughts. Christ will be much in the thoughts of that Soul that truly loveth him. Secondly,

2. *How are the motions of thy Soul after an absent Christ?* Christ as to his person is alwaies absent, that the Heavens must contain till the end of the World, but he is or may be graciously present in his *institutions*, and with respect to his *gracious influences*, and with respect to both these he is often, or may be absent; the first makes up the *desertion of a Church*, when it is general, or a particular person, when it is only the affliction of a particular Soul in some cases, and by some severer providences kept from the ordinances of God; the second is, the particular *desertion* of a gracious Soul, not as to necessary, but as to gradual influences; now how is thy Soul affected to *Christ absent*, when thou canst not enjoy the *Ordinances of Christ*, as thou hast formerly enjoyed them? You see the heart and affection of *David* in this case, in divers Psalms, particularly *Psal.* 42. *Psal.* 63. *Psal.* 84. what breathings, what longings, what impatience doth he there express? So when thou suspectest his absence as to the particular special influences of his grace, how doth thy heart move toward him? doth it move as the heart of the Spouse moved in the third and 5th Chapters of this admirable Song, *Seeking him, sighing after him*, enquiring of all like to inform thee, how thou mightest recover thy lost peace, being restless till thou hast recovered it? This is a sign of love.

3. How

3. How is thy heart *affected* in any presence or *enjoyment of Christ*? What pleasure, what delight and complacency hath thy Soul in the institutions of Christ, in the manifestations of his love to thy Soul. See the instance of the Spouse as to this, *Can.* 3. 4. *I found him whom my Soul loveth, I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my Mother's House, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.* v. 5. *I charge you O you Daughters of* Hierusalem, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.* A rejoycing in the signs of his love, being glad, and resolving not again to part with him, a fear of offending him, and care to please him, are all of them signs of a love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. *A freedom of converse, and communion with him,* also speaketh love. Christ proves himself his Disciples friend, because *he had made known to them whatsoever he had received from the Father,* Joh. 15. 15. *Dalilah* challenged *Sampson* for want of love to her, because he had concealed his secrets from her. The withholding of prayer from God, the want of frequency, freedom, and boldness in prayer, speaks want of love to Christ in the Soul; frequency, freedom, and boldness, holy boldness speaks a Soul full of love to Christ.

5. *What affections hast thou to those things and persons,* that have a relation to Christ, that bear his image and superscription, the Word and Ordinances of God, the Ministers and People of God; by this you shall know your love to Christ. Again—

6. *How canst thou bear the reproofs of Christ?* Our nature doth not love reproof, we must love those very well, from whom we take reproof quietly. *Let the righteous smite me* (saith *David*) *it shall be as an excellent Oil, which shall not break my head.* When a Christian can bear the *verbal* reproofs of Christs Word, and Ministers, and the real reproofs and chastenings of his rod It is a sign of love.

7. *What zeal hast thou for the honour and glory of Christ?* Canst thou not hear him reproached, but that his reproaches fall on thee, thy blood riseth, and thy heart is troubled? It is an argument of little love for God or Christ, when we can patiently hear them abused, and dishonoured, *Psal.* 69. 9. *The zeal of thine house* (saith *David*) *hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen on me.*

8. I must not forget that of our Saviour, *If you love me, keep*

my Commandments. No Soul can so much as pretend to a love to Christ, that makes no conscience of keeping the Commandments of Christ.

9. The Soul, lastly, that hath a love for Christ, will *suffer any thing for his sake*, it will rather suffer the loss of all things, then the loss of Christs favour. By these and such like questions, and notes as these, it will be no hard matter for a Soul to judge of its love to Christ, and by that it will be able to judge, and determine concerning its uprightness.

Use. 3. In the last place doth every Soul that is upright love Christ, and are the degrees of the Souls uprightness according to the degrees of the Souls love, *How do we then all stand concerned to love Christ?* In order to it,

1. *The Soul must be dispossest of other loves inconsistent, and incompetent with the love of Christ.* Such is the love of all lust of any thing that is contrary to the will of God. Such is the excessive and immoderate love of the world. *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world* (saith *John*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 25.) *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; in like manner we may say, *If any man love the world, the love of Jesus Christ is not in him.*

2. *Do what in thee lies to perswade thy self of the suitableness of Christ to the state, and needs of thy Soul*; we love nothing but what appeareth good, that is some way suitable to, and convenient for us. All we can do as to this, is to read the *Scriptures*, which alone give a true account of the state of Souls: To hear them opened, and applied to our consciences by able and faithful Ministers, to meditate upon what we read, and hear. Christ must appear to our Souls an amiable object before we can love him.

3. Lastly, *Pray for the Spirit of Grace*; both effectually to discover *Christs loveliness to you*, and also to draw out your hearts to love him, if we must be taught of God to love our Brethren, whom we have seen, we must much more be taught of God to love Jesus Christ whom we have not seen. Those that think man hath a power in his own will to love God, do not consider that we have not a *power*, in and of our selves (as we often find upon experience) to love a creature, whom yet it were our great interest to love. O *pray*, pray without ceasing, that you may love the Lord Jesus Christ remember, that *the upright love* him, there is no upright Soul in the World but loves him. 2. *Thus*

thou

thou shalt shew thy self to be upright. Nothing more discovereth an upright heart, then a sincere Love to Christ. Now of how great moment it is for a Christian to discern his uprightness, I need not tell you. I shall conclude with a bare naming of some Scriptures containing promises made to uprightness, leaving them to you at your leisure to meditate upon them. Psal. 7. 10. *The Lord saveth the upright in heart, Gods Righteousness belongeth to the upright in heart,* Psal. 36. 10. The End of the *upright man is Peace,* Psal. 37. v. 37. *Gladness belongeth to the upright in heart,* Psal. 97. v. 11. The *Generation of the upright shall be blessed,* Psal. 112. v. 2. *Light* shall *arise upon them in obscurity,* v. 4. They shall *dwell in Gods presence,* Psal. 140. 13. *They shall dwell in the land,* Prov. 2. 21. *The way of the Lord is strength unto them,* Prov. 10. 29. *The integrity of the upright shall guide him,* Prov. 11. 3. *His Righteousness shall deliver him.* v. 6. *The upright in the way are the Lords delight,* v. 20. *Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way, but wickedness overthroweth the Sinner,* Prov. 13. 6.

Sermon XXXI.

Cant. 1. 5.

I am black but comely O you Daughter of Hierusalem, *as the tents of* Kedar, *as the Curtaines of* Solomon.

v. 6. *Look not upon me because I am black, because the Sun hath looked upon me, my Mothers Children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but my own Vineyard I have not kept.*

IT is the Spouse in this excellent Song of *Love* that yet Speaks, Twice we have heard her Speaking to her Beloved. Once, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,* begging some distinguishing token of his Special love: Her heart suggesting to her, that her beloved, was far more ready to imbrace her, then she was to *run after him.* She spake a Second time, *Draw me,* and *we will run after thee,* begging the sweet and powerfull influences of divine grace, Here now she interrupteth her applications to her beloved, with an *Apostrophe* to her *companions* (whom she here calleth *The Daughters of Hierusalem.*) The verse contains a modest *apology* which she maketh for her self. In which are considerable,

1. The

1. The *persons to whom she maketh it*, here stiled, *The Daughters of Jerusalem.*

2. *The Apology it self. I am black* (saith she) *as the tents of Kedar, as the Curtains of Solomon*, &c.

In the latter is considerable, 1. *The thing which she apologizeth* for: That is *her Blackness*, which she confesseth, I am *black* (saith she) and illustrateth, *as the tents* of *Kedar* &c.

2. The arguments of her *Apology*, or head from whence it is drawn. They are four or five.

1. *The mixture of comelineſs with her blackneſs.* I am black *but comely.*

2. *The Influence of heaven upon her. The Sun* (saith she) hath *looked upon me.*

3. *The oppoſitions she had met with on earth. My mothers children were angry with me.*

4. *Her worldly diverſions and imployments. They made me the Keeper of the Vineyards.*

5. *Her own neglect. But my own I have not kept.*

Finally. She pleadeth with them that *they would not look upon her becauſe she was black.*

But what needed this *Apology*? who faulted the Spouſes blackneſs? who queſtioned her comelineſs? This is not expreſſed in the letter of the Text but eaſily underſtood. *Patet quod detraxerant ei nigredinem improperantes.* It is apparent, saith *Bernard*, that they did detract from her, charging her with blackneſs. Neither did the true Church of Chriſt, nor any truely believing Soul ever want thoſe that reproached them. The man according to Gods own heart, heard ſome telling him, *There was no help for him, in God.* We muſt therefore Suppoſe our Spouſe to have heard ſome saying to her to this purpoſe. *Canſt thou think that Chriſt who is the faireſt of ten thouſand, ſhould kiſs thee with the kiſſes of his mouth? Thee? That art by nature an Ethiopian, and by thy renewing actuall Sins, haſt made thy ſelf much more black and ugly. Surely when the King of glory humbleth himſelf to make love to his Subjects, he will chuſe one much fairer then thou art.* Did *Aaron* and *Miriam*, *wonder at, & reproach*, Moſes, *becauſe he had married an Ethiopian* Num. 12. 1. *And ſhould not Chriſt be the wonderment of the whole creation, if he ſhould love one ſo black as thou art?* Whiſpers to this ſenſe, a believer often heareth from the *Devil*, from the men of the world, and from his *own heart* alſo. *Solo-*

mon

mon Personating the true Church, & every true believer, sancieth the voice of these Spiritual adversaries in his Ears, nor is there any Child of God but heareth it at some time, or other. The spouse therefore preoccupieth this objection by this *Apostrophe*, *O you daughters of Hierusalem, I am black but comely* like the tents of *Kedar*, like the *Curtains of Solomon*.

You daughters of Hierusalem] *Hierusalem* is an Hebrew word, and signifieth, *The Vision of Peace*, or *They shall see Peace*; it is to be considered in its *Political*, *Ecclesiastical*, and *Typical notion*.

1. In its *Political Notion*, it signifieth the *Metropolis* or chief City of *Judea*; a City supposed to have been builded by *Melchizedeck*, and by him called *Salem*, he is called *the King of Salem*, *Gen.* 14.8. *Heb.* 7.1.2. *Salem* in Scripture is put for *Hierusalem*. *In* Salem *is God known*, *Psal.* 76.2. It was afterwards for some hundreds of years in the possession of the Canaanites. *Adonizedek* was the King of it, *Josh.* 10.3. who was conquered, and slain by *Joshua*, *Josh.* 10.26. the *Jebusites* afterward lived there in common with the *Benjamites* who did not drive them out, *Jud.* 1. 21. *David* smote these *Jebusites*, 2 *Sam.* 5.7,8. and took the strong hold of *Zion*, & made it his City. It was scituated amongst the Mountains; hence you read of the *mountains being round about Hierusalem Psal.* 125. 2. Yet the habitable part of it was in the Valley, *Jer* 21. 13. Now if we take *Hierusalem in this* notion here, the Daughters of *Hierusalem* are the Inhabitants of this famous City.

2. But there is an *Ecclesiastical Notion of it* so it signifyeth the *Jewish Church*: *Hierusalem* was the place where the *Temple stood*, where was the most solemn Worship of God; thither all the males of the Israelites went up thrice a year to *Worship God*. There lived the *High Priest*; in that place alone (in their settled state) they were to Sacrifice. Hence *Zion* (a City contiguous to this City) the City of David, and *Hierusalem* are often in Scripture put for the *Jewish Church*; hence the Psalmist praying for the prosperity, and restauration of the Church of the Jews, Prays in this *dialect*; *Build thou up the walls of Hierusalem*. So *Psal.* 102. *verse* 23. *to declare the name of the Lord in Sion, and his praise in Hierusalem*. that is, in the Jewish Church. In this sense, *the Daughters of Hierusalem are the members of the Jewish Church*.

3. But there is yet a further *Typical Notion of it*. So it signifieth the Church of God both that part which is in Heaven *Triumphant*, called the *mother of us all* which is called the *New*

Hieru-

Hierusalem Rev. 3. 12. *ch.* 21. *verse.* 2, &c. or that part of it which under the Gospel is still *militant* on earth, *Zech.* 8. 22. Thus the *Daughters of Hierusalem*, are the *Members of the visible Church.* you may take it in either notion; either thus, O my neighbours, you people amongst whom I dwell, or O you that are members of the same Church of God with me; *Brethren* are too ready to censure and upbraid one another, *Aaron*, and *Miriam* spake against *Moses*, *Num* 12. 2. *David* complaineth that he was *an alien to his mothers Children*, *Psal.* 69. 8. and in the next words, the Spouse saith, *my mothers Children were angry with me.* To these she saith, *I am black but comely*; how the Church of God, or the particular Souls in it are *Black*, I shall have occasion more fully to shew you hereafter. Every one will understand, she speaketh in a figure and intends not the *black colour of the flesh*, but some condition fitly enough represented and expressed by a *blackness* of colour, [*But comely*] There is no contradiction in that, There is a comelinesse in some *blackness*. The *Black Eye* is comely, so is the *black marble*. But I reserve a further and larger discourse, concerning the spouses blackness, and comelinesse, till I come to the Propositions of Doctrine I intend to discourse from the words, but what is the meaning of the follow phrase.

As the tents of Kedar: as the Curtains of Solomon.] They are certainly two similitudes which the Spouse brings elegantly to set forth what she had said, either concerning her *blackness*, or concerning her *beauty and comelinesse*. Only the question is, whether the sense be this; I am black *like the tents of Kedar*, and like the Curtains of *Solomon*: but I am also (like them) comely also: Or thus, I am, I confess, *black*, like the Tents of *Kedar*: but I am also *comely like the Curtains* of *Solomon*. The letter pleaseth me best because we read nothing of any black Curtains, that *Solomon made* for the Temple, and it is most likely he kept the colours of the Curtains of the Tabernacle which were *Blue*, *Purple* and *Scarlet*. *Kedar* was one of the Sons of *Ishmael* as you read *Gen.* 25. 13. It is probable that he did build some, City in *Arabia* which (as was very usual) he called after his owne name. We shall read that in the Prophecy of *Isaiah* against *Arabia*, *Isaiah* 21. 17. he hath this expression, *The mighty men of the Children of Kedar shall be diminished.* And in the Prophecy of the Gentiles coming in to Christ, *Isaiah* 60. 7. *All the flocks of Kedar, shall be gathered unto thee, and the Rams of Nebajoth.* You read of it also *Jer.* 2. 20. and *Jer* 49. 28. and *Zech.* 27. 21. *Arabia and all the*

Prince

Princes of Kedar. Keder then was either a City or a Province of *Arabia* which was a very hot Country, they had at that time generally no such fixed houses, nor such wayes of covering their habitations as we have: They did generally live in Tents, which were moveable places of habitation, these were ordinarily covered with the *Skins of beasts* which they killed for their use. That kind of covering as you know in Countreys where the Sun is very hot, is apt to tan into a very lothsome, and unlovely colour. To these the Spouse compares her self. *I am black like the tents of Kedar.*

Like the Curtains of Solomon.] This I take to relate to the latter part of the Spouses words. *Solomon* made *Curtains* for the Temple, and it is very likely they were made in Proportion to those which were made (by Gods Prescription) for the *Tabernacle, Exod* 36. 8. *of fine twined Linnen, Blue, Purple, and Scarlet, with Cherubims of cunning work*; the Spouse compareth her self to these for comelinesse.

Look not upon me because I am black.] That is, you Daughters of *Hierusalem, look not upon me.* The *Chaldee Paraphrast* maketh this the voice of the Jewish Church speaking to the Heathens thus: *O you Heathen Nations! do not despise me because I have made my self blacker then you by doing after your deeds, Worshipping the Sun, Moon, and all the host of Heaven; false Prophets, have made me to err after your ways by which means the wrath of the Lord is poured out upon me.* The reason of this interpretation is their dream that they are the only Church of God in the World. But the text is not to be so restrained. The *true Church of Christ*, or the *truly believing Soul* here speaks unto any others: That they would not look asquint upon her because she was *black*; *Ne torvum intueamini, nec velut per contemptum despiciatis*, (so *Mercer* glosseth upon the words) do not look upon me with an Eye of despight, scorn or, contempt. *As the Leviathan beholdeth all things Job* 41. 34. (so Mr. *Ainsworth* interpreteth it) or as he addeth, not with a rejoycing, pleased or Satisfyed Eye, according to that, *Obadiah* v. 12. *Edom should not have Looked upon the affliction of his brethren.* Or not with an *astonishing, admiring look*: As the Apostle commandeth us not *to think it strange concerning the fiery tryal*, and 1. *Thessal.* 2. 3. that none should be *moved* by the Churches afflictions, knowing that *God had appointed them thereunto.* The English *Annotators* add, not with a *partial* eye, beholding

my *blackness* and not my *comeliness*; no nor yet with a dull dejected, or despendent Eye; Nor yet so *as to take* a Copy from me for your *imitation*. Do not thus look upon me, *because* I am black.

שחרחרת There is a little difference in the form of the word from the word as used before שחרת. It is the observation of some *critical Interpreters*, that this change of the form of the word, maketh a diminution in the sense. So as it should be read, because I *am something black a little black*, duskish, *subnigra, fusca* (thus *Arias Montanus* translates it.) *Nunc se corrigit* (saith *Genebrard*) here she correcteth her self. She had said before she was *black*. Now she altereth her phrase and speaks to this sense; *I am indeed something brown, but not so black as you take me to be*; thus I said *critical Interpreters* in the *Hebr.* carry it. *Mercer* also and Mr. *Ainsworth*, & our *English Annotators* take some notice of it. And Mr. *Ainsworth* quotes a text where another word much of the same form is translated, *something red*. We have now probably the sense of the words. O you that are the People of God, do not look upon me with a scornful abominating Eye, to flee from me, and avoid me: Nor yet to take out a *Sinful Copy* from me: you men of the world, do not scorn, do not clap your hands at me, do not stand amazed, because you see me full of trouble, and affliction, do not look upon me on one side partially; I am indeed *something black*, but not *coal black*, not wholly black.

The Sun hath looked upon me.] The *Arabick* version reads it, *The Sun hath declined me*, but *Avenarius* tells us, the *Hebrew* word שזף signifyeth to *look wistly* and *directly* upon an Object; in that first Conjugation it is used but thrice in holy Writ, *Job* 20 9. *The Eye also that saw him shall see him no more*. *Job*. 28. 7. *There is a path, which the Vultures Eye hath not seen*. The third is this text. So as the ordinary reading is not to be declined. But concerning the *Sun* mentioned in this text there is a great Variety amongst Interpreters.

1. some understand by the *Sun* here *the Sun of Righteousness*, the Lord Jesus Christ who is so called *Malachy* 4. 2. and according to this sense, I find *Delrio* giving a singular sense of these words which he calleth the *Tropological* sense. As if these words were not brought in by the spouse as a *reason of her blackness* but only *as a reason why they should not despise her by reason of her blackness*. Tho I am black, (saith she) yet the Sun of *righteousness*,

teousness, the Lord Jesus Christ hath looked on me and hath clothed me with his Righteousness, therefore you ought not to despise me. There is a great truth in this. If we can Charitably judge concerning any soul that God hath received it, if we see any Person so living, so aright ordering his conversation, that we cannot but think he or she is one whom the Lord loves, and who is accepted of him, we ought not to despise them, because we see them guilty of some failings, or altho we find them made black through a pressure of trials and afflictions. But this seemeth not to be the sense of the words. 2. Others understanding by *Sun* here, *the Sun of Righteousness* make another improvement of the Notion. Christ, [The *Sun of Righteousness*] hath lookt upon me, and I *am become black*, that is, *Vile in my own Eyes.* This is truth, the more the Lord looketh upon any Soul the more mean and low and vile it is in its own Eyes. When our Lord looked upon *Peter he went out*, and *wept bitterly*. *Isaiah* cryeth out. *Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell amongst a People of unclean lips, for my Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* The more the Lord looketh upon any Soul, or the more a Soul looketh up to and upon God, the more vile it judgeth its self; but tho this be true, yet I cannot judge it the truth of this place, where I take the Spouse to be apologizing for her blackness in her outward appearance to others; tho it be also true, That *Exercises of repentance, and mortification* do not commend Souls to the *Eye of the world*, tho they highly commend them unto God. *Bernard* hath yet a 3d improvement of this notion --- *Ejus amore langueo.* God by casting an Eye upon my Soul, hath so drawn out my heart after him, that I faint, and am broken with longings for and after him; this maketh me so *unlovely*, and *black* in your Eyes. I find both these last mentioned notions in *Bernard*. Thus the Souls *blackness*, had only been occasioned accidentally from the Sun's looking upon her.

2. I find that some by the *Sun* (in the Text) understand the *fruits of the Spirit*; such as *zeal* which inflameth the Soul where it is, and as it were burns it up, as it is written, The zeal of thy house hath Eaten me up: *Brotherly Love* which teacheth the Soul to *weep with those that weep*, from which ariseth what the world miscalleth a *blackness*.

3. But I find the generality of Interpreters by *the Sun* (in the

Text) understanding *Persecutions* and *Afflictions*. *Delrio* and *Bernard* (after the mentioning some other notions) yet fix upon this, as the most probable sense of this phrase, and we have in the Gospels a Text of Scripture which justifieth this *Metaphorical* acception of the term. It is that, *Matth.* 13. 6. in the Parable of the sower. In the parable our Saviour telleth them that *the seed which fell upon the Stony ground, when the Sun was up, was scorched*, which he interpreteth v. 21. *when Tribulation, or persecution ariseth because of the word, they fall away.* In this sense I shall fix; so the sense is this:

It is true, I am black, but be not offended, do not contemn, or despise me for it; it is no native blackness, it is but accidental to me: it is not internal, but external, that which makes me thus black in your Eyes is, those Afflictions, & persecutions, which I have met with in, and from the world. The exceeding heat of that furnace of affliction, into which the Providence of God hath cast me, hath scorched me: and that is it which maketh me appear so black in your Eyes. It followeth:

My Mothers Children were angry with me.] The *Chaldee Paraphrast* all along taking the Church of the Jews to be the Spouse here mentioned, by *Mothers Children* here understands the *Heathen*, who were the Children of her mother *Eve*, tempting, and seducing them to their Idolatryes. The thing is true of that Church very often by the Heathen seduced to their Idolatrys; but I find amongst Interpreters, two other senses much more large, and probable.

1. Some by *Mothers Children* understand those lusts and Corruptions, which lye in the womb of our Souls. Together with *the habits of grace*. Thus *Paul* complaineth of the *flesh lusting against the Spirit*, and of a *law in his members*, rebelling *against the law of his mind*.

2. others (more probably) understand *such as are presumptive members of the same visible Church*. The true members of the Church can be no others then such as are *ordained unto Life*, such as are truly *Sanctified* through *the Sanctification of the Spirit*. But there are many others who from their external profession are *presumptive members* of it, so may be called our *Mothers Children*, tho not the Children of our Heavenly Father; such are all false brethren, all hypocrites glorying in an External profession, and meer outward appearance. Such as these are ordinarily angry

gry with such as are the true *Spouse of Christ*. *David* complained long since that he was become *a stranger to his bretbren, an alien to his Mothers Children*; the Apostle, *Acts* 20.30. foretelleth to the *Elders* of the *Church* of *Ephesus* that there should *arise of themselves*, men *speaking perverse things to draw many disciples after them*; you may read at large in the *Epistles* to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, how the primitive Churches of Christ were troubled with them, and *Paul*, in his *Epistles* to *Timothy*, foretells that latter times should be more troubled with such as should resist the truth, as *Jannes* and *Jambres* resisted *Moses*. It was *Bernards Observation*, long since & more lately noted by *Genebrard* upon my text that she doth not call them *Brethren*, but *only her Mothers Children*, not her *Fathers*, for they were *of their Father the Devil, his works they did*. Many such there now are & will be in the Church to the End of the World, who have only a titular relation to Christ, no *real relation*. This now is a Second cause which the Spouse assigneth of *her blackness*. There were many false brethren in her communion who had falsely represented, and reported her and made her appear far more unlovely in the sight of others than indeed she was; this I take to be the most proper sense of this phrase.

They made me the keeper of the Vineyards.] The *Chaldee Paraphrast* by the *Vineyards here* understands the *Idolatry* and *Superstition* of the Heathen, to which the true members of the Jewish Church were tempted by the Heathen their Neighbours, and the *false brethren* they had amongst themselves. Hypocrites, and formal professors are very prone to admit the Superstitions of men in the Worship of God. The *Pharisees* in our Saviours time laid heavy burdens of *humane traditions* upon others, *Mat.* 23. 4. Into this sense *Mercer* and *Ainsworth* interpret the text, observing that it is *their Vineyards*; their *Vineyards* opposed to her own Vineyard, seems to imply the *false Worship*, Rites, and Ceremonies of a bauched and apostatized Churches.

There is yet another sense of the words hinted by *Delrio* and *Genebrard*. It is this, *They intangled me in secular affairs, so made me neglect the things which were Spiritual and of much higher concernment to me*. This now is a third cause, which the Spouse assigneth of *her blackness*: 1. She had before told us she was *Scortched* with *afflictions and persecutions*. The *Sun* had looked upon her. 2. She had *been betrayed*, by her own lusts, and by false brethren,

and

and seduced her to intertain their corruptions, to keep their *Vineyards*, now she tells us That her *secular diversions*, did also much contribute to her darkness, she had been made to serve in the brick-kilns of the world. *Keeping of Vineyards* was a great deal of the labour of those Countrys a painful and laborious imployment; therefore you read, 2 *Kings.* 25. 12. upon the *King* of *Babylons* conquest of *Judea* that the *Captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be Vine-dressers & husbandmen*; & those who in the parable had been labouring in the Vineyard tell the Lord of the *Vineyard*, they had born the burden and heat of the day.

My own Vineyard I have not kept.] Here now the Spouse assigneth a fourth cause of her *blackness*. The question here is, what is meant by *her own Vineyard*? It is manifestly to be understood of something which the Lord had committed to her to *keep*, considering the *Church as* the *Spouse*. The *Oracles* of God were committed to the *Church of the Jews* (as the Apostle telleth us, *Rom.* 3. 2. and the Church is called, *The pillar* and *ground of Truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Paul* tell us, 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. that the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God was committed to his trust*, and telleth *Timothy* the Ministry was *committed to his trust*. St. *Paul* calls it *his Gospel* upon this account, *Rom.* 26. 25. and saith they were put *in trust with the Gospel*, that is, the *Custody* and *Ministration of it*. And St. *Paul* commandeth *Timothy* to commit the things *which he had heard of him, amongst many witnesses to faithful men, who should be able to teach others*. That general term of the *Gospel* signifieth both the *Propositions of the Truth*, and Doctrine of Faith contained in the new *Testament* and also those excellent rules which are to be found in it, relating both to the *Worship of God*, and the *Government of the Church of Christ*, & the *dispensation* and *administration of it*. This *Gospel* as to the *Ministration* of it was by Christ committed, first to the *Apostles*, to be by them transmitted to *faithful* and *able men*, as to the keeping of it to the *whole Church*. The Church of *Sardis*, *Rev.* 3. 8. is commended, for *keeping Christs word, and* not *denying his name*. This undoubtedly is the Churches *Vineyard*. The *Province* which God hath betrusted to her to keep. But every particular Soul hath a *Vineyard* too. And what is its *Vineyard* but its immortal Soul, and the particular trust which God hath committed to it, with relation both to its self and others? What is the *keeping of this Vineyard*,

but

but a Christians observance of the duties incumbent upon him, with reference to his more *general*, or more *particular calling*? So that understanding by the Spouse the particular Christian, she complaineth here of her own voluntary neglect, and carelesness as to her own Soul, suffering the weeds of lusts and corruptions to grow up, and to prevail, according to that of *Solomon*, *I passed by the Vineyard of him who was void of understanding, and lo, it was overgrown with thorns: Nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down*, Prov. 24. 30, 31. This now is the fourth cause which the Spouse here assigneth of her *blackness*; thus I have given you the best account I have been able of the sense of these words, which if you take them as the words of the Church (the collective Spouse of Christ) sound thus:

O you that are my Brethren (members of other Churches) you that are my Neighbours, the men of the World. I must confess I am something black, yet not wholly black, not inwardly black, nor without some comeliness, I may be a little black, yet let not me be the object of your contempt, despight or scorn, let not my blackness make you decline, be afraid, or ashamed of the ways of God; let it not cause you to err as I have erred. I have been under great temptations, long, and sharp trials of persecution, these have a little tanned me, and made me to look something unlovely; I have had some Neighbours, and false Brethren, who have allured, inticed, and betrayed me, my Enemies have imposed upon me a superstitious Worship, superstitious Rites and Ceremonies, and have prevailed with me something to comply with them. Nor am I as to my self to be wholly excused, I must own that through my own voluntary omission, and neglect, I have not kept the Truths, and Ordinances of Worship, nor any of the Laws of God concerning me, so as I ought to have done, or might have done.

If we take the words as the words of the particular believing Soul, they sound thus.

O my Brethren! I am I confess black, but let not my blackness cause you to triumph over me, nor yet for my sake to decline the holy ways of God. I have been under many sore and great temptations, in great heats of affliction; the Sun hath looked upon me, others have too much seduced me, and I have been misled by them, I have been too much intangled in secular concerns, so as I have been too negligent as to the concerns of my own Soul. From the words thus opened,

several

several *Propositions* may be raised, of which I shall discourse in their order. I shall only name them at this time.

Prop. 1. *That even the Spouse of Christ on this side of Heaven, hath her blacknesses, which will expose her to the reproach and obloquy of her Brethren, and the men of the world.*

Prop. 2. *Though the Spouse of Christ be black, yet she is also comely.*

Prop. 3. *As the Spouse of Christ ought to know that she is black, so she also ought to understand she is comely.*

Prop. 4. *As the Spouse of Christ ought to own, and acknowledge her infirmity, and deformities, so it is also her duty at sometimes to own, and acknowledge her beauty, and graces, and to justify her self against those who would upbraid her for her blackness.*

Prop. 5. *It is our duty to take heed how we look upon the Spouses blackness.*

Prop. 6. *Affliction, and persecution from the world, will make the Church, and people of God look black, especially in the Eyes of the men of the world.*

Prop. 7. *Corruptions within, and false Brethren in the bosom of the Church, will make both the Church, and the particular Soul appear black.*

Prop. 8. *Great intanglements in worldly affairs, will make Gods people look black.*

Prop. 9. *The yieldings of a Church, or of particular Souls, to impositions of false and corrupt worship, are a great cause of their appearing blackness.*

Prop. 10. *Nothing makes a Church, or particular Soul so black as their own neglect in keeping their own Vineyards, the trust which God hath betrusted them with.* I shall speak something to all, or the most of these in their order hereafter.

Ser-

Sermon XXXII.

Cant. 1. 5.

I am black but comely: O you Daughters of Hierusalem, *as the Tents of* Kedar, *as the Curtains of* Solomon.

I Shall now begin a larger discourse upon those *Propositions* which I did but name the last time after my explication of this, and the next verses. I will join the two first, and handle them severally, then apply them jointly.

The Spouse of Christ on this side of Heaven, hath her blackness, exposing her to the reproach and obloquy of others, but she is also comely, and therefore ought not to be looked upon, because she is black. Prop. 1.

My business in the handling of this *Proposition* will chiefly lie in these two things.

1. First, Shewing you wherein lies the Spouses blackness, exposing her to the obloquy of others.

2. Secondly, Shewing you wherein her comelines lieth. The confirmation I shall mix with the *explication.* By the *Spouse* here I have all along understood, *the believing Soul, & the Church of Christ*, which is a body made up of these as its Members, they have both their *blackness*, for which they are exposed to the obloquy of others.

1. First, *Sins, and Corruptions make them black.* The best of men, are but as white Swans, with black feet, they have in them a body of death, a law in their members rebelling against the law of their mind, the *flesh lusting* against the Spirit, and they are many times brought into a captivity to the law of their members, and though these motions to sin be ordinarily suppressed, yet they sometimes *break* out. The Pride of one, and the passionate anger and wrath of another, and other lusts in others often

often break out unseemly, and make even the best of Gods People appear black, the *habituated Sinner* is all *black*, there is in him no whiteness, no comelines at all. The *glorified Saint* is all *white*, there is in him *no blackness* at all. The *militant Saint*, is partly white, and in part black. All sin is black. Christ therefore in *justification* makes the Soul *white* through his blood, *Rev.*7.14. *They are made white in the blood of the Lamb.* In regeneration they are made white; cleansed through the *washing of water*, *Eph.*5.21. Hence, Christ tells his Disciples, except *I wash you*, you can never be *made clean*; they are clean, but yet had need *wash their feet*, *John* 13. 10. If there be in us any thing of faith, yet there is also much of *unbelief*; who liveth, and sinneth not? the righteous man falleth seven times in a day, *and who can tell how often he offendeth*? and though indeed the lust and corruption, that is in a good mans heart, doth not commonly break out into scandalous acts, which standers by take notice of, yet sometimes they do. *Lot* and *Noah* were both overtaken with Wine, *David* was overcome by the *stranger* that came to his House. *Peter* denied his Master. *Solomon*, *Asa*, *Jehosaphat*, all the good Kings of *Judah* had their great Errors, which are as black spots upon their memories to this day. And besides the blot which these eruptions of corruption leave upon the particular Souls, they leave also a *blackness* in the Church, which is made up of them. Besides that, there is no Church but hath in it some of unsanctified hearts, who as *Jude* tells us, are *spots in our feasts of charity*, and where they prevail in number, they bring in also another blackness upon the Church, by admission of corruptions, in Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline, *&c.*

2. Particular Souls are also *black through acts of mortification.* The people of God live a dying life; *I die daily* (saith *Paul*) they keep under their Bodies, that they may keep them in subjection to their Spirits. Now though there is nothing makes a Soul to look more white, and beautiful in the Eyes of God, yet nothing makes them appear more *black* and unlovely in the Eyes of the world. The world looks upon Christians chastising themselves with fasting, and tears, in their dejections, and humiliations, as very black, but this is indeed no real, but an appearing blackness, to such as understand no lovelines in any thing but sensuality.

3. The People of God are often *black through afflictions.* *Job* speaking

speaking of affliction saith, *Job* 30. 30. *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burnt with heat.* Hence the afflicted faces are said to *gather blackness*, *Joel* 1. 6. *Nahum* 2. 10. The skin of the Church in the hour of her affliction, is said to have been *as black as a Raven*, *Lam.* 5. 10. and it is said of the *afflicted Nazarites*, Lam. 4. 8. *That their visage was more black then a Coal.* So that you see *Affliction* is every where in Scripture called *Blackness*. Now there is no Child of God in this life *exempted* from *afflictions*, such as are from the hand of God immediately, of which nature are *desertions*, *terrors*, *and Soul troubles* of several sorts, *bodily distempers*, &c. or from *Satan* more immediately, of which nature are *temptations*. Or from *the world*, in persecutions, and injuries by it done unto them, and the Spouse seemeth to have a particular respect to these, for she adds, *my Mothers Children were angry with me.* And as the particular Soul is subject to these blacknesses, so is the Church.

1. *Through a mixture of ill members*, such as (to use *Judes* phrase) are *spots* in the Churches feasts of charity. Such no Church of God hath been free from in any age, some that are corrupt in their tenets, and principles, others that are so in their conversations. God denominates his Church from the sincere, and better part of it, but the world alwaies denominates it from the worser part, and cries —*Crimine ab uno disce omnes*, they are all alike, hence there is no man causeth the name of God to be so reproached, and evil spoken of, as persons professing to religion, and membership in Churches, and living loosely, or growing corrupt in their Doctrines, and Principles.

2. The Church becomes black, *Through the admission of corruption in Doctrine, Worship, or Discipline. All deviation from the Divine Rule* (where it is a sufficient rule in the case) is the blackness of any Church; it is a wonderful thing to observe how prone the heart of man is to this. Though the Church of the Jews had a more infallible rule, and more plain in this case, then any other Church can pretend to. Yet I cannot find that ever the Worship of God continued in it in purity fourscore years. The longest was the time of *David* and *Solomon*, who each of them reigned *forty years*, but in the latter part of *Solomons time*, it admitted of much corruption, there was a great toleration of *Idolatry* (as you read in the story) and you shall observe in the whole History of that Church, in how few Kings Reigns, the

high places, and the *groves* were taken away, and when they were taken away in one Kings Reign, how soon they grew in fashion again in the next, though there were no sins for which the Jews so severely smarted, nor against which the wrath of God was more severely declared by the Prophets God sent amongst them. If (in the *New Testament*) you look over the Epistles wrote to the Church of *Corinth*, and *Galatia*, and the seven Churches of *Asia*, you will again find the same thing; it is true, every deviation from truth, or from the purity of *Worship*, or discipline, will not unchurch a Church, the Lord hateth putting away; concerning *Idolatry*, I know not what to say, that is a Spiritual Adultery, and every where in Scripture is call'd *Whoredom*, and going a *Whoring*, and as *divorce* was lawful in case of carnal adultery, so possibly it may be presumed as to spiritual adultery, that God hath said to a People *Lo-ammi*, you are not my people who are lapsed to idolatry: but for other failings, tho the Lord liketh them not, but hath something against every Church that admits any corruptions of this nature, yet they are but *spots* and *blemishes*, and how far a separation from such a Church may be *lawful*, or is *sinful*, is a great question. I think a total separation is not. But that is not my task at present to discourse.

3. *The Church also may be black through persecutions.* The afflicted state of the Church is called a *lying amongst the pots*, *Psal.* 68. 13. Probably there may be a time towards the end of the World, when the true Church of Christ may enjoy some tranquillity, and enjoy a more serene, quiet, and fixed state then it hath yet enjoyed, or doth at this day enjoy, when it shall not be so incumbred by the Cross, and those tribulations, by which Christians have hitherto entred into the Kingdom of God; there have been some both more ancient and modern Divines, who have inclined to think, that yet before the end of the World, Christ shall reign upon the Earth a *thousand years*, but whether that time which we call *the day of Judgment*, shall last so long, or those thousand years shall be a space of time preceding the last judgment, whether those Scriptures which are usually interpreted in favour of that opinion, signifying Christs being here in Person, or only a quiet, and more tranquil estate of the Church, are questions which I shall not undertake to determine. But as the history of the Gospel Church hitherto justifieth, that

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it hath been a ſtate of affliction, and blackneſs; ſo moſt Divines are pretty well agreed, that we are not to expect any other, until thoſe *thouſand years* do begin, ſo as in this reſpect we muſt look to ſee the Church of Chriſt *black*, however white ſhe be upon other accounts. Now thus the Spouſe is black, not in Gods Eyes, who judgeth not according to *outward appearance*, but *according to the heart*, and in his judgment of men counteth none the worſe, for what happeneth to them *from the World*, or from *the Devil*, and though he cannot look upon iniquity in the beſt ſo as to approve of it, yet doth he not judge of them according to their failings, but giveth an allowance both for their *infirmities*, and *temptations*, upon which account he calleth to us to *behold the patience of Job*, though *Job* had his fits of frowardneſs, and impatience, and often calleth his Spouſe *fair*, and *undefiled*, though ſhe hath many *defilements*. But.

1. The Spouſe upon theſe accounts is *black in her own Eyes*. 2. *In the Eyes of others.*

1. *In her own Eyes ſhe is black*; two things make her ſo. 1. *Her Humility*. 2. *Her Love-jealouſy*. The Child of God is alwaies vile in his own Eyes, and hath a very low and mean opinion of himſelf, and therefore condemneth himſelf for every motion, and prevailing of corruption. *I am a worm* (ſaith David) *and no man, a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people*, Pſal. 22. 6. *O wretched man that I am*, (ſaith St. *Paul*) *who ſhall deliver me from this body of death*, Rom. 7. in another place he calleth himſelf the *greateſt of ſinners*, and the *leaſt of Saints*. *Woe is me* (ſaith the Prophet) *I am a man of unclean lips*; the ſenſe of former ſins makes them call themſelves *black*. I am (ſaith *Paul*) *not meet to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe I perſecuted the Church of Chriſt*. The ſenſe of preſent corruptions alſo makes them ſo judge; *Iniquities* (ſaith *David*) *prevail againſt me*. Hence is the ordinary dialect of pious Souls. There was never any had ſuch unbelieving hearts, ſuch proud, dead, falſe, & hypocritical hearts as ours are. Thoſe who are moſt eminently comely in the Eyes of Chriſt, are uſually moſt black in their own Eyes. 2. *Their Love-jealouſy is another cauſe*. Their love for God is ſo great, that they ſuſpect every frown of Providence, as ſpeaking God out of favour with them for their ſins. Hence it often proveth as great a matter of difficulty to perſuade the Child of God, that God hath any favour for him, as it is to perſuade a ſinner that God hath any diſpleaſure to him.

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2. Secondly (which possibly is here chiefly intended) *She is black in the Eyes of others.* The World dealeth by the Disciples of Christ, as it dealt with him (nor is it reasonable to expect that the Disciple should be above his Master, or the Servant above his Lord) they *saw Christ despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, they hid their faces from him, and esteemed him not.* The men of the world see the people of God, men of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, they despise them, and esteem them not, yea, for the most part their business is to *blacken* them, loading them with *reproach* and calumny, and laying to their charge things which they know not, and all this through an implacable enmity, put betwixt the *seed of the Woman, and the seed of the Serpent*, or because they see themselves condemned by the more righteous conversation of such as fear God. Nay it often so falls out, that the People of God are *black* in the Eyes of their Brethren, through mistake, as *Eli* mistook *Hannah*, or through *envy* or *prejudice*, &c. But this is enough to have spoken concerning the Spouses blackness.

2. Let me now come to shew you how, and in what sense she is comely. 1. *She hath a comeliness besides her blackness.* 2. *In some of her blackness there is a comeliness.*

1. The Spouse is not *wholly black, besides her blackness she hath a great beauty, and comeliness.* Every believer hath something of *unbelief* in him, but he is not an *unbeliever*, he hath a truth of faith in him, there is his comeliness. *Paul had a law in his members*, that was his blackness, but he had also a *law of his mind*, that was his *comeliness.* All sin and lust is *blackness* all gracious *habits* are the Souls *beauty and comeliness.* The unbeliever, the natural man is wholly black, the godly man is not so, there is a mixture in his Soul, he is come into *Canaan*, tho some *Canaanites* yet dwell in the Land, the *faith*, and *love*, and *obedience* of a good man, his pantings, and breathings after God, his complacency, delight, and rejoycing in God, these are all his *comeliness.* The Church of God may have *spots* in her assemblies, these are her blackness, but she keepeth up her *assemblies*, and hath the *Ordinances of God in them*, that is her *comeliness*, she may have several hypocrites, meer seeming professors, these are her spots, from these is her blackness, but she hath many that love the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, these are her comeli-

ness;

neſs; ſhe may ſuffer ſome erroneous principles to be publiſhed in her, that is her *blackneſs* but ſhe keepeth the foundation doctrines of *faith* and *holineſs* pure, and incorrupt; that is her *comelineſs*.

2. *In much of her blackneſs there is a beauty, and a comelineſs.* It is *Bernards* note, whatſoever is black is not therefore *uncomely*. The Eye is black, yet comely. Marble is black, but yet it is comely. Chriſt is *black* but yet he was comely. Look upon him (ſaith that devout man,) clothed with raggs, *blew with* Stripes, daubed with his Enemies Spittle, pale with death, you will ſay he was black, but yet he was comely, yea the *Chiefeſt of ten thouſand*. The Apoſtles ſaw him *comely* when upon the mountain they beheld his glory at his transfiguration. Nay in his *blackneſs* there was *comlineſs*, to ſee him under all this becoming obedient to his Fathers will, even unto death, the bitter death upon the Croſs, working out the redemption and Salvation of all thoſe whom the Father had given him; this was comely. When *the word was made fleſh and dwelt amongſt us* (ſaith St. *John*) *we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth*. Look upon the Child of God, as daubed, and beſmeared with the *filth* and *obloquy* which the men of the World caſt upon him: Scorched with Afflictions, followed with dark, and helliſh temptations; ſo indeed he looketh black in our carnal Eyes but in other reſpects he is comely, even in this *blackneſs*.

1. As by theſe afflictions *Chriſt is magnified in his body*, and he is made *conformable unto Chriſt*, and *filling up what is lacking in the ſufferings of Chriſt*: So he is *comely*. All conformity to Chriſt is *beauty*, Paul deſired no more then *that he might know him, and the power of his reſurrection and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, and be made conformable unto his death*, *Philip.* 3. 11. This is what our Saviour told his diſciples, *John* 15. to comfort them under the Worlds hatred which he knew would make them to appear black, *If the World hateth you it hated me firſt*. The ſuffering child of God lookes black, but as Chriſt is by his ſufferings *magnified in his body* as he is by his ſufferings made more like to Chriſt, ſo he is comely.

2. Secondly, *As a believers afflictions perfect him for glory, ſo even in his blackneſs there is a comelineſs*. The Captain of our Salvation was *made perfect* (as the Apoſtle tells us) *through ſuffering Heb.* 2. 10. and ſo muſt the Souldiers under this Captain be made

made perfect, for *by much tribulation they also must enter into the Kingdom of God. By this* (saith the Lord, speaking of the *Afflictions of* Jacob) *shall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged, and all the fruit shall be to take away Sin.* Afflictions to the Church and People of God, are but as the *furnace for the Silver*, and *the refining pot for the Gold*, like polishing Irons to the Stone, and the File to the Steel.

3. Finally, There is a *comelineſs in this blackneſs*, as Afflictions give the Spouſe *advantage, and opportunities for the more noble and perſpicuous exerciſes of their graces.* Faith never ſhineth ſo much as in a dark place, and ſtate; now for a ſeaſon (ſaith *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7.) *You are in heavineſs through manifold temptations* (their was their *blackneſs*) but it followeth, *That the tryal of your faith being much more precious then that of Gold which periſheth, might be found unto praiſe, honour, and glory.* There now was a comelineſs in their blackneſs; *though he killeth me* (ſaith *Job*) *yet will I truſt in him*, there again was *comelineſs* in *blackneſs*. *Patience* is another grace, the time for the exerciſe, of which is a time of afflictions, and *tryals*; it is a feature in the face of a Child of God hardly diſcernable, but in a day of adverſity, when we fall under ſeverer Providences, then is the time for *Patience to have its perfect work.* If you look upon the Child of God as *lying amongſt the pots*, under the reproach, and obloquy, and rage, and injuries of a vile and wicked generation, who fly at the image of God wherever they ſee it, out of that perfect hatred they have to God, ſo indeed he looks black. But now ſee him under this, owning the righteouſneſs and goodneſs of God, kiſſing the Word of God, ſaying concerning his Enemies, *Let them alone, perhaps God hath bidden them curſe*, and will requite me with bleſſing for all the curſings wherewith they have curſed me, or with *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. ſaying; *It is the Lord, let him do unto me what ſeemeth good unto him*, or with *Stephen*, praying for his Enemies, and ſaying, *Father! forgive them! they know not what they do*; ſo he appeareth comely. Look upon the Child of God, under the withdrawings of divine influences from him, when we hear him crying out, *My God, my God! why haſt thou forſaken me?* he appeareth to us *black*, but if we ſee him under ſuch withdrawings, reſolving to truſt in God, not to depart from his integrity, nor to forget the Lords precepts, nor deal falſely in his Covenant, but ſtill adhering to God, and his ways, and

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following him with fervent and importunate prayers, so again he appeareth *comely*. In short;

1. The *Spouse of Christ is comely in the Eyes of the generality of the Saints, and People of God.* There may be some grains of envy, and passion in the hearts of the best of Gods people, which may cause some misinterpretation of their brethren, as *Joshuah* envied for *Moses his sake*, when *Eldad*, and *Medad* prophecied in the Camp, *Num.* 11. 29. and the Disciples of *John* were *jealous* for their Master, and by *mistakes* they may be judged *black*, as *Hannah* was by *Eli*. But by the generality of the Saints, all such as are partakers of the *Divine Nature*, they will be judged *comely*, notwithstanding their low and afflicted condition, and notwithstanding that partial *blackness* which appeareth in them.

2. They are *comely in Christs Eyes*; and alas how small a thing to the Child of God is it to be judged of mans judgment? *Bernard* thus glosseth upon the words; *Nigra vestro, formosa Divino Angelicoque judicio*, I am black in your judgment, but fair in the judgment of God, and of the Angels. The Spouse is black in the Worlds Eyes, but exceeding comely in Christs Eyes. The Spouse speaketh to her beloved, *Can.* 4. 7. *Thou art all fair my love, there is no spot in thee.* He replieth to her, *v.* 10. *How fair is thy love, my Sister, my Spouse.* v. 11. *Thy lips (O my Spouse) drop as the Hony-comb, Hony and Milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy Garments is like the smell of Lebanon.* Would you be confirmed in this, and understand whence it is that Christ judgeth his Spouse so comely? I will shew you in a few particulars.

1. *Because he loveth her.* Love never calleth its object black, but alwaies imprinteth a lovelinesse in its object beloved; the blackest woman is fair in her Husbands Eye, love with men covereth a multitude of faults, and infirmities, it overlooks blackness and lameness, and crookedness, and any external deformity, it calleth black things white, crooked things straight, and lame things perfect. Christ loves every Spouse of his with a dear and most tender love. But yet this is our infirmity. Christ cannot call any *comely*, who indeed is not so, the Spouse must be comely, before he can judge, or call her so.

2. Therefore she must needs be comely in the *Eyes of Christ, because he hath made her so, by putting his comeliness upon her,*

Ezek. 16. 14. *Thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness which I had put upon thee* (*saith the Lord God.*) No Child of God is comely in his or her own comeliness, but in Christs comeliness put upon him or her. Now this is twofold. 1. *His perfect Righteousness.* 2. *His holy and blessed Spirit.*

1. *His perfect Righteousness.* Thus the Soul is comely by *imputation.* All unrighteousness is *blackness,* and uncomeliness in the Eyes of God, for the *righteous Lord loveth righteousness,* and it is impossible that the Lord should look upon any Soul as *comely,* but that Soul whom he looketh upon as *righteous.* Christ was of old prophecied of, under the *notion* of the *Lord our righteousness,* and the Apostle tells us he was made of God, *Wisdom, Righteousness.* &c. This righteousness of Christ lay in his perfect *obedience to the whole law of God,* and his *suffering* the curse of the law due to us for our transgression of it; it being the act of another, we could not have any interest in it, but by a *gracious imputation,* or *reckoning* it to us, and by this gracious act, upon our faith by apprehending it, it becomes ours, so we are said to be *justified by his faith,* Rom. 5. 1. yet by *his blood,* as *v.* 9, and yet *by grace,* Titus 3. 7. It was an *act of grace* in *God* to accept the performance of another for us, the act and satisfaction of the surety, for the satisfaction, and acts of the principals, yet a satisfaction must be given, for God, *Rom.* 3. 25. *set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins——That he might be just while he became the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* So that upon every Souls believing in Jesus Christ, who justifies the ungodly. God becomes its *justifier,* and the Soul standeth as righteous in the sight of God, through Gods imputation of *righteousness* to it *without works,* and not *imputing sin* (as the Apostle expounds the whole business of justification, *Rom.* 4. 5, 8.) Thus now every believing Soul becomes a righteous Soul in the Eye of God, through the righteousness of Christ put upon it. This is indeed what some modern wits laugh at. But as we say in other cases, let them laugh that win; so every serious Soul will think it hath cause of rejoycing, if it hath thus *won Christ* to use the Apostles expression, *Phil.* 3. 8. which he expoundeth in the very next words. *v.* 9. *And be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;* and I would have all that love their own Souls, look to be one of that circum-

circumcision, which the Apostle speaketh of in that Chapter. *v.* 3. *Which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.* Some trust in Chariots (saith the *Psalmist*) *some in Horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God*, Psal. 20. 7. (I do but allude to that Text. There are some that trust to a righteousness of other Saints (so do the *Papists*) some trust in a righteousness of their own, so do they also amongst others, some trust to the meer free grace of God, without any regard to a perfect righteousness, but we will trust alone in Jesus Christ, and in his righteousness. I fear what follows in the *Psalmist*. v. 8. will be found true in the day of Judgment. Those will be brought down and fall, but those that trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, will rise and stand upright. Those that trust in the good works of other Saints, will find at that day, they will have none to spare, there will not be enough for themselves, and much less to lend to others (as the wise *Virgins* told the foolish Virgins in the Parable wanting Oil, and offering to borrow of them;) and those who trust to a righteousness of their own, will find that they do but trust to a *Spiders webb*, and which hath these two qualities analogous to a Spiders web. 1. That it is a thing spun out of their own bowels. 2. *That the least touch of it sweeps it away*, it is what upon examination, when judgment is laid to the line, and this righteousness to the plummet, will be found to be no such thing as will cover the Souls nakedness, a bed too short for a Soul to stretch it self in Gods sight upon. They say the great *Cardinal Bellarmine* dying, confessed that it was safest *to trust to the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ*; whether he said so or no, I am sure it will be found so. There is an original *blackness*, which cleaveth to every Soul, the not belief of which is possibly the foundation error as to this great point. 1. *A blackness of imputation.* The Apostle tells us, that in *Adam all died*; we were all in the loins of that our first Parent, what he lost he lost for us, we in him plucked a fruit of the Tree of forbidden fruit, and so lost that Original Righteousness in which God at first made man, and became black, and unrighteous. 2. *An inherent blackness*, for having lost the image of the heavenly, we were born with the *Image of the Earthly*, which lay in a Native aversion from God, and a Native proneness, and aptitude to sin against God. This is seen in our *native ignorance, and blindness, stubbornes, and perverseness*, in our naturally *vile affecti-*

ons, turbulent, and impetuous passions, things very far from the Image of God; and hence we are all by nature (saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 2. 3.) *Children of Wrath.* To say nothing of those actual sins, which are consequent to this native blackness, all our *thoughts, words, and deeds*, contrary to the law of God: Divines think the natural blackness of the Soul is well set out by the Prophet, *Ezek.* 16. *Thy birth is of the land of* Canaan, *thy Father was an* Amorite, *thy Mother an* Hittite. *In the day wherein thou wert born, thy Navel was not cut, neither wert thou washed in water to supple thee, thou wert not salted at all, nor swadled at all, none Eye pitied thee to do any of these things for thee, but thou wert cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day wherein thou wert born.* All this while here is no appearance of any thing but filthiness, and blackness. Now how cometh this black, and most filthy creature to be made clean, and comely. see *v.* 6. *I said unto thee while thou wert in thy blood, live.* (There is what we call effectual calling.) *v.* 7. *I have caused thee to multiply---and thou art increased, and waxed great, and come to excellent Ornaments,* v. 8. *When I passed by thee, it was a time of Love, yea, I spread my skirt over thee, and I covered thy nakedness, yea, I sware unto thee, and entred into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water,* (there the Spouses blackness began first to wear off) *yea, I thoroughly washed thy blood off thee, and I anointed thee with Oil.* (the *Psalmist* tells us, *Oil makes the face to shine.*) *I clothed thee also.* v. 14. *And thy renown went forth among the Nations for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness put upon thee saith the Lord thy God.* God there under the similitude of a wretched new born Infant, and the care of a Parent for it, setteth out the *woful state of the Jews, and Gods care for them,* and as Divines judge, the wretched state of every Soul by nature, till washed by Christs blood, and made comely, by Christs comeliness, is also by that similitude excellently expressed, but it is plain enough from other texts, that our *comeliness of righteousness, that righteousness* wherein we must stand righteous before God, is put upon us by Christ, and *his comeliness*, though by imputation, made ours.

2. *Christ makes us righteous, by putting his Spirit into us.* Hence he promiseth to put his *Spirit* into his people, and you read of the holy Spirit *dwelling in believers*, and working in them. *This is the*

comelineſs of *Regeneration and Sanctification*, which is called the *Sanctification of the Spirit*, the Spirit of Christ in us, whoſe fruits Gal. 5. 22. are *love, joy, meekneſs, &c.* Indeed whatſoever rendreth a ſoul comely and beautiful in the eye of reaſon, upon the union of which holy Spirit with the ſoul, the ſoul becomes a new creature, *old things are paſſed away, and all things are become new.* In the ſame hour wherein Chriſt ſaith to the ſoul *I will, be thou clean* he alſo ſaith *I will*, be thou *pure*, and *holy*, an habitation *for God through the Spirit, undefiled in the heart and in the way.* This is alſo metaphorically ſet out by the ſame Prophet *Ezekiel* 16. 10, 11, 12. *I decked thee alſo with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain about thy neck, and I put a jewel upon thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head.* What do all theſe *metaphorical expreſſions* ſignify, but the various habits of grace, with which* Chriſt adorneth the new creature, in the day of *its new birth*, in the day when he removeth from it the guilt of its iniquity, he doth not only waſh, and cleanſe it with his blood from the guilt of its Sin, but he reneweth and ſanctifieth it, and furniſheth it with all habits of grace. This is alſo *Chriſts comelineſs, for as the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*, ſo himſelf received the Spirit without meaſure that he might meaſure it out by meaſures to his people, and they might *of his fulneſs receive grace for grace.* The holy Spirit is the Spirit of Chriſt, and all its operations are his; Chriſt tells his Spouſe in this *Song* that *ſhe had raviſhed his heart* with the *chains about her neck*, but there is not a jewel in thoſe chains, but cometh out of Chriſts cabinet, he giveth thoſe chains with which himſelf is raviſhed, though theſe divine powers, and habits be his, yet being once given and by us produced into *Acts* they are truely and inherently ours: Our *Faith, Love, Patience, Meekneſs Joy, &c.* Our ſtock of grace upon which our ſouls live, yet not without the daily influence of Chriſt and aſſiſtance of his ſpirit; and this ſtock is capable of augmentation, or diminution, as it pleaſeth God to let out upon us or to withdraw from us, and as we more or leſs improve it, tho indeed Chriſt hath a conſtant inſpection upon his Spouſes treaſury and will take care that it ſhall never ſo fail, but there ſhall be *a ſeed of God* abiding in the ſoul continually, and the grace of Regeneration in it ſhall be *like a ſpring of water whoſe waters fail not.* This now is the Spouſes real beauty, and comlineſs, which makes her inwardly comely, tho ſhe be externally *black, comely* in Chriſts eyes, and

comely

comely, in the eyes of judicious Christians, tho black in the Worlds eyes who judg from external accidents, or in the eyes of less judicious Christians, either judging from outward accidents, of particular acts or from some corrupt passion in themselves.

3. *They must be comely in Christs eyes, because he judgeth not of comelinesse from the outward appearance, nor yet from single spots and defects, but according to the heart, the scope and intention of that: and from the more constant tenour of the Souls actions.* The speaking of a few words to this, will prevent an objection: How Christ can judg a soul comely, that is yet full of spots, infirmities and defects, for even the best of men sinneth seven times a day, and who can tell how often he offendeth? I say Christ judgeth *not from the outward appearance*, man judgeth so, but God judgeth *from the heart*, he looketh at the inward man how that is; nor doth he there judg from every *particular motion*, any more then from any *particular act* in our *conversation*, but from the *sincerity* and *uprightness of the heart*. If *there be a willing mind it is accepted*. The World judgeth from the outward appearance, and indeed that is one disadvantage with reference to the World that the spouse of Christ is under, she is *Nigra extrinsecus, formosa, intrinsecus*. Black outwardly but comely inwardly. *The Kings Daughter*, saith the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 45. *is all glorious within*. A good Christian is like a Merchants warehouse, which is full of rich wares and commodities tho little appeareth without: The hypocrite is like a *Pedlars stall*, where all is exposed, and perhaps much more then the pretended owner is worth. There is a double judgment of the comelines of Virgins; the one is *sensuall*, from the *lines*, and *colour of the face*, the *Symmetry of parts*, the other is *rational* from the complexion of the soul; Knowledg, Ingenuity, Modesty, Sobriety &c. Those who judg the former way may be deceived, that which the Vulgar calleth *beauty*, is deceitful, and vain, and fading, the person that is possessed of it is very often unlovely enough, through a crooked, and froward disposition, and badness of humour; the latter maketh the true judgment; men judg of the comelines and beauty of persons, meerly from the visage, and outside, so the children of God, are by them judged unlovely, and black as Ravens. If they see the Church or Child of God tossed with tempests and afflicted, groaning under the sense of sin, they presently judg them according to the outward appearance black, Christ looketh upon the heart, the bent and scope of that, its sincerity, and uprightness, its purity and holiness. The World

World again judgeth of men by single acts, (tho Philosophy teacheth us, that from them none is to be denominated either virtuous, or vicious.) God doth not so, which is remarkable in the two famous instances of *Job* and *David*. Job you know had great fits of impatience, yet saith God, *Behold the patience of Job*. David was a man of very great failings; his defiling of *Bathsheba*, his *murder of Uria*, his *numbring of the People*, were three (to name no more) yet God doth not onely mention him, as a man *whose heart was perfect*, a *man according to Gods own heart*; But in all the following story of the *Kings* of *Judah* God mentions him as a Pattern, telling us, that such a one did walk according to *David*, or such a one did not do according as *David* had done. The Apostle also tells us, that we have an *high Priest that can have compassion on our Infirmities*, upon the *ignorant*, and *those that are out of the way*. All which makes it appear that Christs judgment of the *Beauty* and *comliness* of persons is not from single acts, but from a constant and general course of life and conversation. Now every true believer sets his heart to seek the Lord, and to walk before God with a true and perfect heart, and tho he faileth in many particulars, yet the Lord overlooketh them and judgeth of the Soul, only from its scope and intention, and the general course of his actions, hence it is that the spouse of Christ tho in some respects she be black, and in the Worlds eyes she appeareth black, yet in truth, and in the Judgment of Jesus Christ she is comely.

Ser-

Sermon XXXIII.

Canticles 1. 5.

I am black but comely (*O you daughters of* Jerusalem) *as the tents of* Kedar, *as the Curtaines of* Solomon.

My business in this exercise, is but to apply my last discourse. Where, I shewed you how, and in what sense the Spouse of Christ is *Black* and yet *comely*; black in her own eyes, in the worlds eyes, and somtimes so in the eyes of her weaker Brethren, but comely in Christs eyes, and in the eyes of her more judicious Brethren. Having a great comlinesse, in some of her blackness, and a comelinesse besides her blacknes: *Black* through remaining lust, and corruption, through Afflictions, and persecutions: But comely hrough an *imputed righteousnes*, aud through the *habits of grace* with which God hath adorned her. I come now to apply that discourse; and First,

We may from hence gather the true notion of a child of God, and understand how he stands distinguished from one that is a *natural man*, and yet an *unbeliever*. The true notion of a child of God is this: He is one who is *imperfectly perfect*. *Black* but *comely*, you shall observe in Scripture, that *perfection* is both *predicated* and *denied* concerning the People of God; *Not as if I had attained, or were already perfect* saith *Paul Phil.* 3. 12. We are commanded to *strive after perfection*, to endeavour to *perfect holines* in the *fear of the Lord*, but it is a mark which no man hitteth, Heaven is the only place, *where just Souls are made perfect*, both as to their *fruitions*, and as to their *Actions*. A thing is then said to be perfect, and so a person, when there is nothing wanting to it, or him, nothing that can be added, and in this sense no man can be said to be *perfect*: on the other side we are not only commanded to study *perfection*, but it is said of many in holy Writ that they were *perfect*. *Noah* was a *just* and *perfect man* Gen. 6. 9. Job was *perfect* and *upright*, Job 1. 1. *Paul* saith he *spake wisdom amongst them that*

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are perfect. 1 Cor. 3. 6. *Phil.* 3. 15. *Let us as many as be perfect.* A Christian is perfect in the same sense that he is *comely.* In short there is a threefold *perfection* may be predicated of a Christian.

1. *A Perfection of Justification.* In this sense every believer is *comely* through Christs righteousness put upon him and reckoned to him and he is *perfect,* for the state of justification is a state that admits not of degrees, thus we are (as the Apostle speaketh to the *Colossians compleat* in Christ.

2. There is a *Perfection* of *Regeneration and Sanctification.* this is threefold. 1. *Of degrees;* thus none is perfect, no not one, none liveth and Sinneth not against God, there is something to be added to the best mans *habits* and Acts of Grace. 2. Of *Parts;* thus again every believer *is perfect,* Sanctified, (as the Apostle speaketh) *in body, and mind, and spirit,* the man is made a new creature, all the faculties, and powers of his Soul are renewed and Sanctified. 3. Of *scope, design and intention.* This is *uprightness,* this is called *perfectness* because God upon the covenant of grace accepteth the Soul upon the account of Christ as if it had fulfilled the whole Law of God. Rom. 8. 3, 4. *What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through our flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin* (or by a Sacrifice for sin) *condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.* God accounteth the righteousness of the Law fulfilled, by those who *walk after the Spirit,* tho personally it is not, because *Christ condemned sin in the flesh.* Thus *Noah* is said to be a *perfect man,* Gen. 6. 9. and *Job* a *perfect man* and *upright;* this is expounded v. 8. *one that feareth God and eschweth Evil.* For in the strict sense of *perfection;* Job saith chap. 9. v. 20. *If he justified himself his own mouth should condemn him,* if he should say *he were perfect that should prove him perverse.*

3. There is a *comparative perfection* in this sense the Apostle saith 1 Cor. 3. 6. *That he spake wisdom amongst them that were perfect,* and *Phil.* 3 15. *Let us as many as be perfect be thus minded* that is, as many of us as are *comparatively perfect,* whose attainments as to *knowledg* and faith are higher than others. The State of the Saints is in no other sense a *State of perfection.* So as I say they are imperfectly perfect which is the same with that of the Text, *Black but comely.* And this sufficiently distinguisheth the believer from the *unbeliever* whether the *profane person* or the *hypocrite.* The unbeliever may say *he is black,* but he cannot say he is comely. What

beauty can there be in any Soul not reconciled to God? they are all *blackness*, all *deformity*. It is true there is a great deal of difference in these men, some of them are *black* and *filthy* in the eyes of the rational, and more orderly part of the World, such is the *Atheist*, the profane *Curser* and *Swearer*, the *Blasphemer*, the *Drunkard*, the *Thief*, the *Oppressor*, the unrighteous, and intemperate man, these are the sots of the Earth, the spots of the World, the shame, and reproach of the Nation, or City in which they live, Beasts walking in humane shapes. But there are many others who have much beauty in them in the eyes of the World, and humane reason, yet are not comely in the eyes of Christ. If a man be *Sober*, and *Temperate*, *Just*, and *Righteous*, *Kind*, and *Charitable*, tho he liveth not up to the strict rule of the Gospel, and the Commandments of God, yet living up to the conduct of humane reason, and the advantages of humane society (which the others infect, and destroy) the World counteth him a very good man, full of beauty, and comeliness, applaudeth, commends, and courts him. But now the Lord Christ, not judging according to the *outward appearance*, but *according to the heart*, seeing in this mans heart, no *love of God* constraining him to these acts, nothing of the fear of God awing this mans Soul unto his duty; God I say seeing him in these actions, neither acting from a *perswasion* that this is the will of God, nor from a belief of the *Promises* or of the *Threatnings*, nor from an *Obedience* to the *Precepts of God*, but meerly from *Politick*, and rational principles, from self ends, & interests, that he may appear to men to be good, and seeking in these actions the *praise of men*, *not of God*. Or meerly under the conduct of reason commanding their passions, in order to their more comfortable being in this World, and a more *honorable* and acceptable converse with the best men in it. God I say seeing this, judgeth these *morally vertuous men black*; we that are Parents to Children, and Masters to Servants, tho we cannot judge of their hearts, yet can distinguish between actions which they do upon, and in obedience to our command, and what they do not at our command, nor out of obedience to us, tho they be things which done please us, being what we would have had done. God who knoweth the heart will much more do so. I remember our Saviour, *Matth.* 23. 23. pronounceth a woe to the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*; for (saith he) *you pay Tythe of Mint, and Annis and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement mercy, and faith, these things ought you to have done and not to have left the other undone.* Christ judgeth the comeliness

lineſs of a Soul, not meerly from its external acts, but from that faith in the Precepts, Promiſes, and Threatnings of the Word, from that love, fear, and obedience to God, which ought to have principled thoſe acts, and if they had been ſo, would have made thoſe acts more intenſe, certain, ſteddy, and uniform, if theſe be wanting, the Life-colours are wanting to the Picture. Other things make but up the *Skeleton* of the duty, and are but as a draught of the lines of the Face without the Life-colours which ſeldom have much beauty in them, and the Soul, notwithſtanding all this fair and ſplendid outſide is in his eyes but as a *painted Sepulchre* within which is nothing but a ſtench, and rottenneſs, and the bones of dead men. So that no Soul that is without *Faith*, without the fear and love of God, and that acteth not out of obedience to Chriſt in what it doth, but is black, wholly black in the Lords eyes, how fair ſoever in its own eyes, or the eyes of the men of the world; and what *Auguſtine* ſaid of old of the beſt, and moſt vertuous actions of the Heathens is true of the beſt actions of theſe titular Chriſtians, they are but *Splendida Peccata*, Splendid Sinnings. Thus now I ſay the true Chriſtian ſtandeth diſtinguiſhed from unbelievers of all ſizes whatſoever, none of them are comely, but wholly black in the eyes of Chriſt, becauſe they have none of *his comelineſs put upon them*. The glorified Saint is altogether whitehe hath not onely waſhed his garments in the Blood of the Lamb, but he is alſo delivered from the infirmities of humane nature, from the Sin that eaſily beſetts him, the weight that preſſeth him down, the war in his members from the luſtings of the fleſh againſt the Spirit, the law of his members ſo often rebelling againſt the law of his mind, and bringing him into a captivity oft times to the law of Sin, and is now preſented before Chriſt *without ſpot or wrinkle*. This is the felicity of his State.

The Apoſtle ſaith that *we are now the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*. Sin here maketh us black, affliction and ſorrow make us appear more *black* then we are, the tranſlated Soul neither ſinneth nor yet ſuffereth, or ſorroweth any more; the ſtate of the Child of God differeth from theſe, becauſe *he is black*, it differeth from the ſtate of the unbeliever in this life, becauſe he is not onely *black* but alſo *comely*; hence you may underſtand the error of thoſe who *dream* of a *ſtate of perfection* which the People of God, may and do attain in this life, ſome go very high in blaſphemy, telleng us that we are *Chriſted* and *Godded*, and that the believer

is as spotless as Christ, &c. The Apostle indeed tells us, *we are made partakers of the Divine Nature*, but it is one thing to be made partakers of, another thing to be transformed into the *Divine Nature*. Christ is the *chief of ten thousand, altogether desires*, there is *no spot no blemish* in him. The best of Gods people is *black* as well as comely; black through inherent corruption, and unrighteousness, tho comely in respect of *imputed righteousness*, and inherent habits of grace and holiness. The Apostle tells us that, *by one mans disobedience many were made Sinners*, and that we are all *by nature, children of wrath*, Eph. 2. 3. Those who would have Christ to die *for every man*, being pinched with that question, What did Christ then purchase for those that shall never be saved? some of them answer, he purchased for all a *totall freedom* from *Adams Sin*; I know no line in Scripture to justify that; it was after Christ had dyed that the *Apostle* tells us we are *all by nature children of wrath*, but he that can fancy that he liveth, and sinneth not against God, and so is not black through actual sin, doth yet more foully deceive himself, certainly, he must not look into the perfect law of God, or else is not able to distinguish *white* from *black*. If he looked into the divine law he would quickly with Saint *Paul* see that the law is *Holy*, and *Spiritual*, and *Just*, and *Good*, and that the best of men is but *carnal sold under Sin*. Let not then any glory in a fancyed perfection, it is but a glorying in appearance, not in reality. All that the Spouse gloryeth in is, that she was not altogether black. It is a true saying of *Mr. Calvin*, that it is the greatest piece of our perfection to be sensible of our imperfections. As vain is the glorying also of them who glory in an exemption from afflictions, that this Sun hath not lookt upon them, afflictions have not *scorched them*, as they have scorched others, the Apostle tells us, *that if we be without chastening then are we Bastards, and not Sons*. It is not our glory to be free from them, but to *indure them*, not to be wholly exempted from them, but under them to exercise our faith and patience, and to *glorify God in the Fires*. The motto of a Child of God is *Black* but *Comely*, black through remaining lusts, and coruptions; comely through *imputed righteousness* and inherent habits of grace and holiness. *Black* through *Affliction*, and *Persecution*, *Comely* in, and under them, glorifying God in the Fires, by the exercises of *Faith* and *Patience*.

Use. 1. From hence every inquisitive Christian, *may take just measures of himself*, he is not to judg of himself by his *blackness*, whether it

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be the *blackness* of *renewing sin*, and corruption: or the blackness of *Affliction* and Worldly Opposition, and *Persecutions*. Let him examine himself,

1. *Whether he hath not a mixture of grace with corruption.* Sin in dominion is not indeed consistent with grace, but Sin in being is; there are Twins which struggle one with another in every good Soul. Every Christian will find he hath a flesh to be crucified, members to be mortified, and a law in his members, some impetuous motions of lust, at some times, but let him examine whether he doth not find also a Spiritual part, and a law in his mind; the flesh indeed *lusteth against the Spirit*, that is a Christians blackness, but doest thou not also find, the *Spirit lusting against thy flesh*? that is thy comliness. A true Christian is not to judge himself from the freedom of his Soul from sin, but from the war and combate of his Soul with sin. He in the Gospel that said, I *believe, Lord help my unbelief*, expressed the lively Image of every true Christian. So doth St. *Paul* more largely, *Rom.* 7. 18, 19, 20. *For I know in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not, but the evil which I would not that I do; now if I do that which I would not it is no more I that do it, but sin, that dwelleth in me: I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, for I delight in the law of God after the inward man.*

2. Let him Secondly examine himself, *whether there be not a comeliness in him, in, and under his blackness of Affliction and worldly opposition.* A wicked man may be black through affliction, but his blackness is like the blackness of a coal, which is a dead colour and hath no beauty in it. The Child of God is also *black* from the same cause, but his is like the *blackness* of a polished marble, which hath a great beauty and comliness in it, The trial of his faith in his afflictions appeareth more precious, then that of gold that perisheth, his love to God then appeareth, by his panting after him, and firm adherence of Soul unto him, his meekness, his patience, all shine forth under his afflictions. The demeanour of People under afflictions, will much discover whose they are.

3. Thirdly, *The comeliness of the Spouse of Christ is not a comeliness without blackness, but a comeliness notwithstanding blackness*: That is to say, *It is not a Native*, but an *adventitious, and Superinduced*

induced comliness, not adventitious from any good dispositions, or any acts or indeavours of our own singly, but a gracious *imputation* and *infusion*. The imputation of Christs righteousness, the infusion of gracious habits, a comeliness arising from Christs comeliness put upon the Soul. So as tho the poor creature hath been guilty before God, and iniquity yet doth sometimes prevail against it, the righteousness of Christ being reckoned to him for righteousness, and his heart being renewed, & sanctified through the Spirit of Christ, and the bent of it being set right for God, notwithstanding his blackness, the Lord doth judge him comely and beautiful, overlooking his blackness by reason of sin, and infirmity.

4. Lastly, *Every Child of God will own, and be truly sensible of his blackness. I am black* saith the Spouse. The hypocrite boasteth of his *whiteness*; come, (saith *Jehu* to *Jonadab*) and *see my zeal for the Lord God of hosts*. God, I thank thee (saith the Pharisee) *I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican, I fast twice in the week, I give tythes of all that I possess, Luk.* 18. 11, 12. he owneth nothing in himself but *whiteness*, & averrates all *blackness*; yet *v.* 14. he went *away to his house not justified*. Hypocrites are hardly perswaded to own in themselves any *blackness*. The Children of God, are as hardly perswaded to own any beauty, or comliness in themselves, I gave you before the Instances of *David* and of *Paul*. The reason is because the hypocrite trusts to a *Spiders web*, a righteousness from himself spun out of his own Bowels and he is concerned to justify his integrity, and to make it as whole as he can; again, all that he doth is to be seen of men, and therefore he must set the best face of his actions that he can, the Child of God seeketh for no such things in himself, but despairing in himself he flyeth to the righteousness of Christ, and freely confesseth, and owneth his own nakedness, that he might be clothed with that righteousness; again, the Child of God seeketh not the *praise of men*, nor his own honour and *glory*, but seeketh the *praise of God*, and the *honour* and *glory* of Christ alone.

Use. 3. Thirdly, This notion affordeth a great relief to the People of God against their *own dejections*, and *despondencies*; 2. *Satans temptations*; and 3. *The worlds upbraidings*.

1. Against his own *despondencyes, and dejections*. A Child of God living under the power of that Precept, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Examine*

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your selves, prove your selves whether you be in the faith or no: is often looking into his own heart, and can seldom please himself with the prospect. He seeth in his own heart much of *Unbelief*, much of *Vanity*, much of *Hypocrisy* always some lust or other, a body of death remaining in him, iniquity prevailing against him, he sinneth 7 times every day, and he seeth it every night and oft times as much out of heart, much dejected, crying out, *Unclean, Unclean*, I am black, wofully black, no better then a painted hypocrite, I make a fair shew to the World, and deceive some of my brethren, but alas they do not see that lust, and vanity, that pride, and passion, that folly and hypocrisy which I can with half an Eye discern in my own Soul, surely I deceive my self, I have no portion in God, no relation to Christ, I cannot be his Spouse. Christian be of good Chear! thou art black, but art thou not also comely? When a Child of God hath found out the best of himself all his comfort will be found to lie in that one text, *Rom.* 8. *v.* 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.* He can neither look into his own heart, and see his inward thoughts, and the motions there, nor consider his tongue, and the issues of that, nor compare the best of his actions with the Divine rule, but he seeth himself by all condemned, and findeth nothing to relieve him in is dark thoughts but in Christs *imputed righteousness*, and *that there no is condemnation to them that are in Christ*. And that is enough, provided that he hath this evidence of his being in Christ, *That he walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit*.

2. It affordeth the same relief against *the most desperate temptations of our grand adversary the Devil*. Satan we say first tempteth *to Sin*, and then he makes advantage of our hearkening to his temptations to tempt us to further sins, and those of a more heinous, and horrid nature, to *despair of Gods mercy*, to *destroy our selves*, &c. He first attempteth to make the Soul black by moving it to sinful acts, then his next work is to perswade the Soul, that God will never pardon such a sinner, Christ can never Love such an *Ethiopian*. Hence those strong & violent impressions upon Souls under the power of temptations. God is an holy God, of purer eyes then to behold iniquity, he can never set his heart upon such a polluted vile wretch as I am, I have been guilty of thousands of willful *Omissions* of duty, and *Commissions* contrary to my duty, possibly some particular sin or sins lie as an heavy

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load upon the poor creatures conscience. The Spouse here hath furnished such a Soul with an answer to the tempter. *The Spouse of Christ is black*, but yet *comely*. Let then such a Soul thus answer these suggestions of the tempter, O thou Prince of darkness, it is true, I have been a grievous sinner, and as such Christ cannot Love me, so far forth as I am black I am unlovely, but I am not wholly black, Christ cannot Love my sins, but he can pardon my sin and Love my Soul. The Lord hath been graciously pleased to pardon my sins upon my repentance and my acceptation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving him as my Saviour; he hath said to me *while I was in my blood, live*, he hath fixed his Love upon me who was by birth an *Ethiopian*, he hath hung a Chain about my neck; I am *black* but I *am comely*. I have met with a story of a Minister, who going to visit and pray with a poor creature possessed by the Devil, the Devil thought to have stopt his mouth, by objecting to him some sins committed by him in his youth. The holy man answered, confessing the charge, *but Satan* saith he, upon my repentance Christ, hath since that washed me with his blood. Another story I have met with of a worthy Person, who lying upon his sick bed, and being alone, one opens the door, and comes in, in the habit of a Scrivener, with a *Pen, and Inkhorn and Paper*, and setting himself down at the table in the Chapter, called the sick man by name, and told him he was sent from God to take account of him, of all the sins he had done for which he must presently go and answer to God before his Judgment seat. The good man, rightly apprehending that it was the Devil, had assumed an habit to tempt, and disturb him, bid him go on, and write first, *Gen.* 3. 15. *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Upon which the evil Spirit presently disappeared. (Speaking only from my memory I may forget some circumstances, but this is the substance of the story.) What the Devil in these cases did by a more audible voice he doth yet every day by impressions made more secretly upon the Spirits of some or other that fear God. For tho conscience will of it self often bring sin to remembrance, and reflect sins upon the Soul committed long before, yet they are some times reflected with such violence, and degrees of terror, and attended with such strong motions, and solicitations to despair of Divine mercy, and to self murder, that it

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is but reasonable to judge, there is more in them then the ordinary workings of conscience. In such a dark hour as this, it will be a great relief to a Soul to think that the Spouse of Christ is *black*, but *comely*. Doth the Devil then object thy blackness, whether by reason of past, or present sins, in bar to thy trust and confidence in God, for the forgiveness of them through the blood of Christ? Reply to him, Satan, I have been black, I confess it, *I am black*, but I am comely also, having my Garments washed, and rouled in the blood of the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the World. I am as the *Tents* of *Kedar*, they are black, but I am also as the Curtains of *Solomon*, they are exceeding beautiful.

3. It also relieveth a Christian under *Persecutions*, and *afflictions*, and against the *Worlds upbraidings*, because of them. The *Barbarians* concluded *Paul* a Murtherer, because they saw a *Viper* cleaving to his hand, and the men of the World are very prone to judge, and condemn the People of God for what happeneth to them in this life, they see the blackness of Gods Peoples visages under affliction, and persecution, but the love of God in chastening them, that they might not be *condemned with the World*, the exercises of their faith, and trial of it, and its appearing more precious then that of Gold, their *patience*, & its perfect work; these are things in which their *comelyness* appeareth in, and under afflictions; these are things which they do not see. Gods People are also ready to conclude against themselves, because of their tryals, but there is no just reason for it; afflictions are but a blackness of the skin, the Child of God may, notwithstanding them, be within exceeding beautiful, and comely. The tents of *Kedar*, though they had *black* and unlovely coverings and outsides, yet within might be fill'd with *Spices* and Riches.

I shall shut up this discourse with some few words of exhortation to that duty, which this notion of truth calls to us for. Use. 3.

1. It calleth to all the People of God for *humility*, a mean and low opinion of themselves; beauty is often a great temptation to *Pride*, whether it be *natural* or *artificial*. *The Daughters of* Sion *were haughty, and walked with stretched forth Necks, and wanton Eyes, Isaiah* 3. 16. *Spiritual beauty* gives no advantage to a Soul, to think of it self above what it ought to think. In all reason we should have been *some cause* to our selves of that whereof we glory, we should have some *propriety* in it; and there should be in it some *perfection*. The comeliness of

Gods People is neither *natural*, nor any *acquest* of their own. There are three things which may keep the most comely of Gods Children humble.

First, *The consideration of their former blackness.* Let but any of them look back to the rock out of which they are hewen, and to the hole of the Pit, out of which they were digged, and they will see no reason to be exalted above measure; their Father was a *Syrian*, their birth was of the land of *Canaan*, their Father was an *Amorite*, *their Mother an Hittite*, and in the day wherein they were born, they were cast out to the loathing of their persons, not *salted*, not *swadled* at all. Nor was this all, there is none of them but had their conversation in times past, according to the Prince of the power of the Air, *fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, Children of Wrath by nature.* &c, There is none of them but hath reason to pray, that the Lord would not remember the sins of their youth against them, and to beg of God that for them, he would not write against them bitter things, nor make them to possess their *years of vanity.* None of them but before Christs comelines, was put upon them, had been guilty of sin enough to make them to walk softly all the days of their lives.

Secondly, The consideration of their *present blackness* is enough, though they are *comely*, yet they are *black* still, they have a *body of death*, a *law of their members*, the *lustings of the flesh against the Spirit*, sins that easily beset them, weights that often press them down, the beauty of the best of Gods People is but like the beauty of the *Moon*, which is full of spots, hath a dark part, and often suffers *great Eclipses*, and all whose light is borrowed. He observeth not his own heart that doth not see enough in the imperfect, and extravagant motions of it, to keep him humble.

Thirdly, The third is the consideration *from whence he deriveth his beauty.* If men and women would but debate a little with their own reason, they would see no reason to be proud of a comeliness arising from any *external Ornament*; it is something beneath a Reasonable Being, to be beholden to a *Stone* (Jewels are no more) or a *little Earth* (such are Gold and Silver) a *Plant*, or a *Fly*, or a *Silkworm*, or a *Sheep*, a little Wool, or Flax, for that which should commend him or it. No artificial beauty is our own, and so a thing not to be gloried in. All the come-

comelineſs of a Child of God is a *derived comelineſs*. His *blackneſs* is his own, his *comelineſs* is from *another*, it is Christ that hath *made him to differ*, he hath received his beauty, and therefore ought not to *glory*, as if he had not received it.

And this is the ſecond place ought to mind them of their *duty of thankfulneſs, and admiration of the love of Chriſt*. When (ſaith *David*) *I conſider the Heavens, the work of thy hands, the Moon and the Stars which thou haſt ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man, that thou viſiteſt him?* Yet *David* in that *Pſalm* is ſpeaking of no more then Gods more common mercies of *Creation*, and *Providence*, but what greater reaſon hath a Child of God to cry out, Lord, what is man, that thou ſhouldſt remember him? Lord? What was I, that thou ſhouldſt remember me, and fix thy love, and put thy comelineſs upon me? I was by nature an *Ethiopian*, and have contracted much more blackneſs, by my converſation in the world; now that the Lord ſhould make us comely through his comelineſs, that he ſhould fix his love upon any of our Souls, and put any of his Chains about our Necks? What manner of love was this? To which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, as *Zech.* 16. 8. *When I paſſed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was a time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedneſs; yea, I ſware unto thee, and entered into a covenant of life with thee, ſaith the Lord God, and thou becameſt mine?* Or as *Jer.* 3. *v.* 14. *Turn O backſliding Children* (ſaith the Lord) *for I am married unto you?* To which of them hath he at any time ſaid, *my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled?* We had none of us either Beauty or Portion, Chriſt hath given us both. Admire the height, and depth of *Divine Love*, and conſider what an ingratitude it would be, if any of us ſhould now like *Iſrael*, Ezek. 16. 15. *Truſt in your own beauty, and play the Harlot, and pour out fornications on every one that paſſeth by.* Beſtow our hearts, our love, and affections upon any *object* contrary to him, beneath, and beſides him; whether it be not reaſonable that we ſhould be wholly to him, and for him, who are wholly from him, and are nothing but what we are in him. Br. 2.

Thirdly. This notion calleth to the people of God, *not to be overmuch diſquieted, and dejected*. It is one thing to walk *humbly*, (that is our duty) another thing to walk *dejectedly* (that is our infirmity;) we have no reaſon to be proud, becauſe we are Br. 3.

black, not yet to *despond*, and be *dejected*; because in Christs Eyes if we be upright, if we prepare, and fix our hearts to seek the Lord, we are comely. We have no reason, because of our *blackness*, to glory in our selves, but we have reason to rejoice, and to glory in our comeliness, which though indeed Christs comeliness, yet being put upon us, becometh ours. A believer hath therefore hath nothing to do, but to see that *his interest in Christ be clear*, and to see to *wash his feet*, and he is *clean every whit*. We have reason to consider our ways, to reflect upon our infirmities, to be humbled for our failings, and to walk humbly at all times, in the sense of them, but still to incourage our selves in the *Lord our righteousness*, to hope in God, and *rejoice in Christ*, tho we *have no confidence in the flesh*, either in any priviledges of our *birth*, or in any works of our own.

Br. 4. Lastly, This Doctrine calleth upon all *not to look upon the Spouse of Christ, because she is black*. They are the words of our Spouse, following in the next verse, but the proper application of what she saith in this verse, the use which she desireth her Brethren to make of this her imperfect and black state. Something (God willing) shall be spoken hereafter more largely for the explication of those words, then the streightness of my time will now allow. I shall therefore reserve the fuller explication of this duty, until I come to the next verse, and shall give you but a short tast and *specimen* of what I shall then more fully inlarge upon.

1. We ought not to look upon the Spouse of Christ in these circumstances with a *supercilious, scornful*, and *censorious Eye*. The Eye is the Organ of the body, by which the Soul first taketh the cognisance of a thing, and is suitably affected; there are two false rules by which we judge of persons. 1. *When we judge of them by particular actions.* 2. *When we judge of them by external accidents*; the first of them indeed is more proper then the latter, because they are the fruit of the Soul, the other are forreign, and adventitious; neither of them are a safe rule of Judgment; not the former, because none is to be denominated from single, and particular acts, and this the *Philosopher* will teach us, and indeed if this rule of judgment should be true, what judgment must have passed upon *Lot*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Jacob*, *Job*, *David*, *Peter*, all the most eminent Servants of God, whose names are upon Sacred Record, (they were all guilty of irregular acts. Not the latter, for it is not that which

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is accidental to a man, but that which proceedeth from him that defileth a man. Take therefore heed of a *censorious scornful Eye*, when you look upon the People of God in their *blackness*, consider, that you also *may be tempted*, that although you now *stand*, yet you may fall.

2. Look not upon her with a *pleased, and satisfied Eye.* The Eye is that Organ of the Body, which giveth the Soul delight, content, pleasure, and satisfaction in the object, *Psal.* 92. *v.* 11. *Mine Eye also shall see my desire upon mine Enemies.* We have naughty, and corrupt hearts, ready to take a *secret delight* and pleasure in the slips and failings of our Brethren, let this be far from you, either to rejoice in the *real blackness* (the failings, and miscarriages) of any, whose general conversation is not unworthy of the Gospel, or to rejoice in any of their afflictions, *we are to weep with those that weep*, not to rejoice, when we see our Brethren weep. The first rejoicing is opposite to your duty, with respect to the honour of God, which suffereth by others sins as well as our own. The second is eminently contrary to that love, and fellow-feeling, and compassion which we owe onto our Brethren.

Thirdly, look not upon them, *so as to take out a copy for your imitation.* Rocks stand up in the Sea, and *lights* stand upon the Land, to give Ships notice of Rocks and Sands, not that Mariners should run upon them, but that they may avoid them. for this end also are the failings and sins of Gods People Recorded in Holy Writ. When you see a Child of God black, either through some sinful failing, or through some sharp trial of affliction, look upon him as wistly as you will, to move your pity, your Bowels of compassion, and tears, to excite in you the Spirit of Prayer, and supplication on his behalf, to quicken you to use all means in your power to help him up, and to *restore him in the Spirit of meekness*, but take heed of copying out his failings. But I shall speak more fully to these things hereafter, when I come to the next verse.

Ser-

Sermon XXXIV.

Cant. 1. 5.

I am black but comely: O you Daughters of Hierusalem, *as the Tents of* Kedar, *as the Curtains of* Solomon.

YOU have heard me discoursing the first and second Propositions which I observed from this Text, I shall now discourse the third, and fourth, (for I shall handle them together, as I did the 2 former.) Take them thus.

Prop. *As it is the duty of the believer to confess, own, and acknowledg his or her failings, and infirmities, so he ought also at other times to own, and acknowledge his graces, and beauties.*

You see here are two *Propositions.* 1. Godly Men, and Women will, and ought at sometimes to acknowledge their corruptions, blackness and infirmities. 2. That they ought also at other times, to own and acknowledge their graces, and beauty. The Spouse doth both in one breath, *I am* (saith she) *black, but comely.* The handling of this Proposition will lead me to the discoursing of 2 *Questions*, or *Cases* of *Conscience.* I begin with the first.

Qu. *In what cases, how, and to whom a conscientious Man or Woman is bound to confess his or her sins?*

Ans. 1. *Upon all occasions, and at all times, he is bound to confess all his sins unto God.* Not that the Divine knowledge can be bettered by such a confession, for he who knows what things we have need of before we ask them, knoweth what sins we are guilty of before we confess them, but it is a piece of homage we owe unto God, and a duty which his revealed will hath made, and declared a *medium* in order to our obtaining of mercy and forgiveness, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to*-

to forgive us our sins. There was of old a *confession* required before the bringing of the *Trespass Offering*, *Num.* 5. 6. Consonant to this you will find the practice of all the Servants of God. *I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, Psal.* 32. 5. Thus you read of the more publick *Confessions* of *Daniel*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*. This is on all hands granted as a duty out of question, and to be extended to all, and all manner of sins, especially in *secret Prayer*, where no sins ought to be hidden from the Lord, those we know, and remember ought to be confessed more particularly, others more generally.

2. *There are diverse cases wherein a Christian is obliged to confess his sins unto his Brethren, or to such as God hath set over him as his Guides.* They may all be reduced to three heads, Where 1. *The glory of God*: Or, 2. *The good of his neighbour*: Or, 3. *The good, or peace of his own Soul*, may be promoved, or advantaged by such a confession. I will mention 4 more special cases, in which all, or some of these may be concerned.

1. *Where a Christian hath stumbled upon the same stone, and fallen, and by reason of such fall may be under temptations to cast away his confidence in God, and despair of Divine Mercy.* In such a case as this, my Brothers peace and spiritual good may probably be promoved by telling him, that even also my foot slipped, but yet through Grace I was recovered. In this sense I understand *David, confessing his sins, Psal.* 51. 13. and praying for the restoring of Gods Salvation. Then (saith he) *I will teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* I will tell others what a great sinner I have been, and how, notwithstanding the multitude, and greatness of my sins, I found favour with thee, and this shall incourage them to confess their sins, and humble their Souls before thee, and implore also thy mercy and favour. Thus Christ bids *Peter*, Luk. 22. 32. *When he was converted, strengthen his Brethren.* When thou art *converted* in that Text, is as much, as when thou art recovered from thy fall, how should he strengthen his Brethren, but by *confessing his fall*, and *Gods goodness* in recovering him, by telling our Brethren, that our circumstances were the same with theirs, and how the Lord shewed us mercy, we both direct them what to do, we help their faith, and confidence in God, and strengthen them in their addresses, and applications to the Throne of Grace.

2. *Where any man discerneth that his Brethren are prone to think*

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of him above what they ought to think; this is that which made *Paul* forbear his glorying, 2 *Cor.* 12. 6. *Lest* (saith he) *any man should think of me above what he seeth me to be*, and doubtless; this was that which made that great Apostle, though he sometimes magnified his *Office*, and the *Grace of God* bestowed upon him, yet also so oft to vilify himself, as 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. *Who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, but obtained mercy, less then the least of all Saints*, Eph. 3. 8. *One born out of due time*; doubtless this ought to be carefully avoided by us, we ought to take heed, that Gods glory be not given unto us, and his Grace obscured, or eclipsed, by mens having us in admiration. In such a case a true believer will not be ashamed more then *Paul*, to own his own sins and blackness.

3. A third case is, *Where a Christian seeth, that without bringing a scandal upon the Gospel, he may by owning, and confessing his sins unto men, advance the glory of Gods Free-Grace, and make God to be more admired, and adored in the emanations of it.* Free-Grace is that which hath made the Child of God what he is, and is therefore the admirable object in the believers Eye, and where a Christian seeth an opportunity to predicate that, and advance it in the Eyes of any, he will not lose it, nor stick at the shaming, and dishonouring himself, so God may have his glory from that shaming of himself. Now because Free-Grace is never more magnified, then when a multitude of sins are forgiven, and a great sinner is received to favour, a good Christian (observing circumstances) where they will fit this end, will not spare this acknowledgment, though it tendeth to his own shame, and dishonour. So that God may be glorified, he is content to take shame to himself. I say *observing circumstances*, and indeed the chief circumstance to be observed, is the *reputation of Religion*. He will therefore decline it in the presence of profane and ungodly men, who would make an ill use of such discourse, to blaspheme the good, and holy ways of God. Thus *David* refrained from *good talk whiles the wicked were in sight*, Psa. 39. v. 1, 2. *Confession of our sins one to another called for*, Jam. 5. 16, 17. *is one of those holy things which must not be cast before Dogs*, one of those *Pearls*, which must not be thrown *before Swine*. Thus you shall observe in St. *Paul*, that in that part of his Epistles, where he writeth with reference to the Saints, he openeth himself, and layeth himself naked, but where he speaketh of himself with re-

relation to the false Apostles, there he *magnifieth his Office.*

4. A fourth case is, *where a Child of God can probably judge, that by his confession of his sin, and owning of his blackness before men, he may be advantaged by their counsels, or by their prayers.* There are two ways by which a Christian may be advantaged by *the confession of his sins unto men.* 1. *With respect to the obtaining of his pardon.* 2. *With respect to his peace, or the obtaining a sense of his pardon.*

1. *I say with respect to his obtaining pardon.* Not that it is in the power of man to pardon sin, he only can discharge a debt, to whom it is owing. Sin is a debt to the justice of God, and who but God can remit this debt? It is not in the power of *Pope*, or *Priest*, or *Minister*, to pardon sins, or grant absolution to any, but *declaratively*, he can indeed declare the will of God, to pardon the sins of those that truly *repent*, and *believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, but that is all the Minister can do in the remission of sin, the Act is Gods, the Ministers *absolution* is valid or invalid as the Person doth, or doth not truly repent, and truly believe. But yet I say the *confession of sins*, not only to *Ministers*, but to *private Christians*, may be of great use and effect, in order to the obtaining of our pardon, by vertue of that promise, 1 *Joh.* 5.16. *If a man see his Brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and give him life who hath not sinned unto death.* Now unless we know that our Brother hath sinned, how shall we ask for him, and unless we have seen him, how shall we know it, without his own confession of it us.

2. But secondly, *It must also be of great advantage to us with respect to our peace, or sense of pardon*, and that is not only (as the other) by obtaining their prayers for us, but also by obtaining their advice and counsel, thus oft-times a Christians owning, and confessing some particular sins, either to a judicious and faithful Minister, or to some judicious, and well experienced Christians, proveth a great ease, and relief to his mind, by their speaking of some word in season, or by some seasonable advice, and counsel. Now in such a case as this a Christian may be under the same obligation to confess his sins unto men, that every one is to do what is of most proper Spiritual advantage to his Soul.

3. Lastly. *There are some cases wherein a Child of God will own his blackness even before the world.*

1 *When he cannot conceal it without denying the truth.* A Christian is not bound to proclaim his Sin to the men of the world

when it may tend to the reproach, and blaſpheming of the name of God, but if the caſe be ſo, that he hath failed in their ſight, and they come to the knowledge of it, and charge him with it, they muſt not tell a lie to cover their own ſhame. When *Tamar*, *Gen.* 38.25. ſent to her Father in law *the Signet, and Bracelets, and Staff*, with that meſſage. *By the man whoſe theſe are I am with Child. Diſcern I pray thee, whoſe are theſe.* Judah, *acknowledged them, and ſaid ſhe hath been more righteous than I.*

2. When *the ſin is known, and is an eminent injury to our Neighbour.* In caſe of all injuries to men, which are capable of *reparation, and ſatisfaction, ſatisfaction is neceſſary* in order to Gods pardon, if we be able to make it, but not *confeſſion* in all caſes. As now ſuppoſe a Servant hath ſtolen from his Maſter, during his ſervice with him, and his Maſter be one that is an Enemy to Religion, and Godlineſs; afterwards God changeth this Servants heart, he is certainly bound to his ability to make his Maſter reparation, & full ſatisfaction, but I do not know that he is bound to come to confeſs it unto him, who probably would make no other uſe of it, then to reproach, and blaſpheme the name of God, and that way, and courſe of Religion, in which he is ingaged. But in caſe the thing be known, then confeſſion even to man may be our duty, to take ſhame to our own Souls, and give glory unto God.

3. Laſtly, *a Child of God will confeſs his ſin even before Men of the World, where he ſees a probable opportunity to do other ſinners good by it.* And this moſt *commonly* happeneth when men have been companions in ſin, one to, and with another. When men have been companions one to another, in *Drunkenneſs, Theft, Sabbath-breaking*, or any other courſe of ſinning. A good man may ſometimes probably judge that his owning and confeſſing with tears, to his old Companions, his fellowſhip with them in ſinning, may probably invite them to a fellowſhip with him, in a conſideration of his or their ways, in a ſenſe of, and godly ſorrow for their ſins, and if he hath any ſuch hopes, any ſuch proſpect, he will confeſs his blackneſs even to them. Thus I find ſome Divines interpreting that, *Jam.* 5. 15. *Confeſs your ſins one to another.* That thoſe who have been colleagues, and companions in ſin one to another, ſhould confeſs and bewail their ſins each to other, tho I muſt confeſs I rather think that Text is to be underſtood of *intimate, ſerious* Chriſtians, confeſſing their ſins freely one to another, in order to the obtaining of the benefit of each others

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prayers, because of what follows, *And pray one for another.*

These now are those cases and times, in and-under which, the Spouse of Christ will confess and acknowledge that she is *black*, black through the prevailings of sin and corruption.

Of this *Confession of sins* we have plentiful instances in Scripture, both of such as were more *publick*, and such as were more *private*; it is brought as one argument to prove the Holy Scriptures to be no humane Writings, but the Word of God, and that holy men wrote, as they were inspired by God, that they have published their own *failings*, and made their own sins to stand upon Record to Posterity, which is not the way of ordinary Writers, who commonly write for their own honour and praise. Besides the Scripture instances, we have it in the daily practice of Gods people, not only in their dayly prayers they put up to Almighty God; but in their more private converses, with Ministers, and with fellow Christians, which are very full of these confessions, and abasements of themselves.

This freedom of Gods People in owning, and acknowledging their blackness, proceedeth from several causes. 1. The Souls *humiliation before it be brought home to Christ.* The Soul being enlightned by the Spirit of Grace, seeth the *vileness*, and *filthiness* of its own heart to that degree, that it is ashamed, and thinks that it cannot abase itself enough in the sight of God, and from this disposition of the Soul to abhor, loath, and shame itself, proceedeth this freedom, & willingness in the Soul upon all occasions (with respect had to Christian prudence) to vilify itself by the confession of its own blackness and infirmity.

2. It proceedeth also from the *habit of humility* given to, and wrought in the heart of every believer; this is one of the perfections of the new Creature, it differeth from the other little more then as the *disposition* from the *habit*. This teacheth the Soul at all times a mean and low opinion of itself. The Hypocrite is alwaies proud, and looks upon all his gifts, and good actions with a multiplying glass, which makes them appear more then they are, and greater then they are. The humble Soul looks upon all as less. In me (saith *Paul*) there dwelleth no good thing? Hence he can hardly be heard to say any thing but in diminution, and defamation of himself.

3. It proceeds also *from this Souls more perfect understanding the mark of perfection.* He knoweth better then another, what God requires of him, what degrees of faith, love, zeal, holi-

sines, this makes him a better judge of his own imperfections, and more ready to confess, and bewail them. The Hypocrite and natural man understandeth not the breadth of the Divine Law, what *faith*, what *holiness* God requireth of him, he is *proud, knowing nothing* (as the Apostle speaks of some, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4.) not only his *Pride*, prompting him to exalt himself, but his ignorance, knowing nothing as he ought to know it, is the cause of his want of freedom to this duty. It is with such a man, as it is with a *Sophister* in the University. A little knowledge that he hath, puffeth him up; he thinks he knows all things. But when he comes to be *Master of Arts*, to have lookt into Books a little more, and to understand the compass of learning a little better, then he complains of his ignorance, and the small portion of knowledge which he hath. So the man that hath but a mean and imperfect knowledge of the will of God, he is proud, and thinketh he knoweth all things; but when God comes to open his Eyes, and to let him see the mysteries of Divine knowledge, he seeth more duty then he saw before, and consequently more sin, and more defects in his own Soul: There is a vast difference betwixt that knowledge of *duty* & sin, which is in the heart of a Child of God under the illumination of the Spirit of Grace, and that which is in a Soul not under that special illumination.

4. *Again a Christians often comparing himself with others, and judging himself by their measures, is often a great cause of this.* The natural man ordinarily chuseth companions like unto himself, and judgeth of himself by their measures, seeing himself (as the Pharisee, *Luk.* 18.) to exceed the *Drunkard* in temperance, and sobriety. The *Extortioner* in justice, and mercy, the *Adulterer* in chastity. The *Atheist* in a formality of dutiness (a form of godliness; he seeth no blackness in himself to confess, he is Captain of his Form. But now the converted Soul being come to be a companion of those that fear the Lord, he sets before himself the examples of the Saints of God in Holy Writ, and of those that are yet in the world, that excel in *virtue*. In the Scripture he reads of the faith of holy *Abraham, who believed in hope against hope, not staggering at the promise through unbelief*, the *patience of Job*, who when he had lost all his *Estate*, all his *Children*, yet did not *speak inadvisedly with his lips, nor charge God foolishly*, he reads of *Davids* exceeding love, and delight for, and in *the law of the Lord*. When he looks amongst his new Companions, he sees in one Christian more tenderness of heart,

heart, in another more faith, in a third more zeal, and activity for God then he can find in himself; hence he cryeth out of his *blackneſs* and bewaileth his coming ſo ſhort of others.

5. Again he liveth in a *daily ſenſe of his wants* and *defects*; My ſin ſaith *David, is ever before me,* and ſo his tongue doth but expreſs the inward ſenſe, and apprehenſions of his Soul.

6. Laſtly, as all ſuch Souls will be ſenſible of their defects, and wants, ſo they are continually deſirous of an healing of their wounds and a *Supply* and *relief.* Which they know *confeſſion* is the way to obtain. As for *confeſſion unto God,* the Wiſe man hath told us *Prov.*28. 13. That *he that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper: but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them ſhall have mercy.* David telleth us, *Pſal.* 32. 3. *That when he kept ſilence, his bones waxed old, through his roaring, all the day,* For (ſaith he) *Day and night thine hand was heavy upon me, my moiſture is turned into the drought of Summer.* What remedy did he find? *v.* 5. *I acknowledged my ſin unto thee, I ſaid, I will confeſs my trangreſſions unto the Lord and thou forgaveſt the iniquity of my Sin.* Nor was this a particular favour to *David* but what others may expect upon the like application to God *v.* 6. *For this ſhall every one that is Godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayeſt be found, ſurely in the floods of great waters they ſhall not come nigh unto him.* A Godly man knoweth, that as the hiding of his diſeaſe from the Phyſician, and his wounds from the Chirurgeon is not the way to be cured, or healed, ſo neither is the hiding of the nakedneſs of his Soul from God, the way to have it covered; for altho in this there be a difference, that our *ſpiritual Phyſician* knoweth our diſeaſes without our diſcovery of them to him, which the earthly Phyſician doth not, yet God notwithſtanding his knowledge, requiring our acknowledgment, makes the caſe the ſame. And the reaſon is much the ſame for the confeſſing of our ſins eſpecially in ſome caſes to a *faithful Miniſter,* or to *private Chriſtians.* God ſent *Abraham* to *Abimelech Gen.* 20. 7. For (ſaith he) he *is a Prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee & thou ſhalt live. Geneſ.* 20. v. 7 and he ſent Jobs friend to *Job, Job* 42. *v.* 7. — and (ſaith he) *my ſervant* Job *ſhall pray for you, for him I will accept.*

This in the firſt place lets us ſee the difference between a *Child of God* and one who is but a *formal hypocrite* An hypocrite generally ſeeth nothing but *whiteneſs* in himſelf. *Jehu* can ſee, and call *Jonadab* to ſee his zeal for the Lord God, but he can ſee

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see nothing of his own self ends in all that he did. The Church of *Laodicea* said, I *am rich*, and *increased with goods*, and *have need of nothing*, tho at the same *time she was wretched, miserable, blind and naked.* On the other side *Paul* complained that he *was the least of the Apostles, not worthy to be called an Apostle*, &c. Yet so false are our hearts that there may be *hypocrisy* even in our *confessions* of our sin, and blackness, whether to God or to man, we must therefore take heed, both to our *design* and *end* in these confessions, and also to the truth and manner of them. The hypocrite never confesseth his blackness, but in hopes, that for his *confession* he shall be reputed white, and the praise of men is all that he seeks after. Hence. 2. he doth it without any *serious sense of the sin* which he confesseth, or *heart contrition* for it. A *confession* of sins which is but a bare recitation, and Enumeration of them, is not that confession which God requireth or accepteth.

Use. 2. Secondly. This calleth to us all *for the practice of this duty.* I have shewed you that there is a threefold confession of our sin which is our duty. 1. A *confession unto* God. 2. Unto the *faithfull Ministers* and *Servants of God*; 3. *Unto the men of the World.* The first is our duty at all times, and under all circumstances and we have nothing to regard as to that, but knowing the *matter of confession*, keeping a watch upon our hearts, and ways that we may know our errors and the plague of our own hearts, that we do it in such a manner as God hath directed, and prescribed; *confession* must not be the meer Sacrifice of the *Calves of our lips*, but the *Sacrifice of a broken, and contrite heart.* But this is not that of the Text, where the Spouse is not speaking to God, but to the daughters of *Hierusalem*, it is to them the Spouse saith, I *am black.* In what cases this *confession* to men is our duty, I have largely shewed you, as also what advantage may arise from it, both with reference to Gods glory, and the good of our own, and others Souls. I shall onely offer you some few directions for the more advantageous performance of it.

1. There is a great deal of prudence to be used in the choice of that friend to whom thou dost thus unbosom thy self. 1. *Conceal not thy self from that able* and *faithful Minister of Christ, whom thou hast intrusted with the charge of thy Soul.* I am very far from pleading for that *auricular confession* in the Ear of the

the *Priest*, which the *Papists* make such a stir about. Amongst other supernumerary Sacraments which they have added to those 2 which alone were instituted by Christ, they have one which they call *the Sacrament of Penance*. In order to which they require in *Lent* especially, but at other times also a circumstantiated confession of all men and womens particular sins, which being so confessed to the Priest (who is therefore called their *confessor*) he appointeth them a *penance* to be done for them, and so absolveth them from the guilt of them (as they pretend.) As we know of no Satisfaction to be given for sin, but what is given by the death of Christ (excepting only in cases of wrong done unto men capable of reparation;) Nor of any power in any to forgive sins but only in God, only the Minister may declare what God hath done or will do in case of our true repentance and faith: so we know of no incumbent duty upon any Christian to make a particular confession of sin to the Priest, and only judge such *particular confession* necessary in some particular cases, for the disburthening, and easing of Christians consciences, pressed under the guilt of some particular sins, and in such a case an able and faithful Minister of Christ is doubtless the most proper Person to make confession to, both because as by his *office* he is both an Interpreter of the mind, and will of God, and to *pray* for the *People*, so he is or ought *to be one of a thousand*, like *Saul*, taller then his Brethren by the head, and shoulders in knowledge & gifts of greater knowledge & judgment in the things of God, and so more able to minister a word in season. It is said that it cannot be said of all, they are so, but it is to be presumed, that the same wisdom which teacheth every man and woman, to commit the business of his bodily health, to the ablest & most faithful Physitian he can chuse, and the concern of his Estate, to the most able & faithful Lawyer he can, will also direct a Christian to commit the far more weighty concerns of his Soul, to the most able and faithfull Minister that he can; nor ought any Christian to be more abridged in his liberty with reference to the latter of far more concernment, then with reference to the former of far more minute concernment to him, But I say a good Christian having made choice of such a Person he is undoubtedly the fittest Person to confess our sins unto, when they lye heavy upon our conscience and we cannot recover our Peace, and that with respect to both the ends of such confession, whether *Prayers for us or Counsel* and *advice*, and that both with respect to the *abilityes of*

such

such a person, which cannot but be presumed greater in order to the revealing the mind, and will of God to us, and so giving us advice and counsel, and with reference to his *Office*, he being one whom God hath set over us, and gifted with reference unto us. But set aside the case of a *disturbed conscience*, not able otherwise to gain peace, or some particular cases, upon which cases of conscience, and perplexing questions may arise too hard for a private Christian to answer without some help, I see no need of any particular Confession unto Ministers more then others.

2. *As to more private Christians.* I have also shewed you several cases wherein some particular Confessions of sin may be highly expedient, if not necessary. It must be the care of a good Christian so to manage this duty, that he may attain the ends which he aimeth at in it, without dashing upon such Rocks, as every good, and prudent Christian ought to avoid. To that end,

Prop. 1. *Christians ought to use so much wisdom as may protect their profession from reproach and scandal*, & which may prejudice the repute either of themselves, or others walking in the holy ways of God. The honour of the Gospel, and profession of it is a great thing, and though we must not commit the least sin, that any such good may come of it, yet whatsoever prudence we can use to prevent any thing of this nature, is doubtless our duty. This evil ariseth from the needless publication of the sinful failings of professors. He that hath *sinned openly*, ought to be *rebuked openly*, and openly to *confess his sin*, that the Church of God offended by his fall, may be satisfied in the truth of his repentance, and recovery out of the snare of the Devil, but where the sin is of another nature, and hath been committed secretly, there is not only no need of such a publick confession, but it may be of a greater mischief, and ill consequence, then good, by reason of a wicked world, which watcheth for Gods Peoples haltings, to reproach profession, and the holy name of God. Though therefore in such cases *private Confession*, even of more private sins, may be necessary and expedient, yet it ought to be managed with prudence, as to the manner, that is, in the best consistency with the end to which it is directed, and for the avoiding such things as may tend to the dishonour of God, and disadvantage of the more publick interest and cause of God, and therefore much wisdom is to be used in the choice of a friend in this case, for though *Solomon* hath advised us, *Pro.* 25. 9.

To

To debate our case with our Neighbour, yet in the next words he hath added, *discover not thy secret to another*, thereby informing us that *Neighbour* in that Text is not to be expounded in that latitude, as in the Parable, concerning him *who fell amongst Thieves*. Every one, no not every good man is to be trusted with the *Secrets of Souls*. Considering the end of this action, and the great thing that is to be avoided in the performance of it, Three things seem requisite in the choice of a private Christian, to whom a prudent Christian may thus unbosom himself. 1. *Silence and Secrecy*. 2. *Knowledge and Wisdom*. 3. *One of whom we may presume that he hath some more then ordinary interest in God*.

1. I say, first, *Silence and Secrecy*. Your ordinary experience telleth you, that even amongst good men, some have a much better command, and government of their tongue then others, and as it is observable that such fall into more errors themselves, then others, for in a multitude of words there wanteth not sin; so such persons are least to be trusted with the Secrets of Souls.

2. Secondly, he that confesseth his faults to another, doth it, in order to his *advice*, and *counsel*, this maketh *knowledge, and spiritual wisdom*, requisite in the person whom we chuse to unbosom our selves in this manner unto; every man who hath *knowledge* enough to guide his own Soul in the ways of God, yet hath not *knowledge*, *judgment*, or *experience* enough to give spiritual advice and counsel to his Brother.

3. If this *Confession* be made in order to obtaining the *benefit of prayers*, the same wisdom will direct us to make choice of such as we can reasonably judge to be persons likely to prevail with God in prayer; there are some that are more *mighty in the Scriptures*, more *exercised* in the ways of God then others, these are most fit for *advice*, and *counsel*. There are some that are more exercised in prayer then others, and more prevailing with God, these are fittest to hear our Confessions in order to our advantage by their prayers, and these generally are such as walk most uprightly, and closely with God. The Lord heareth not sinners, *but if any man be a Worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth*, John 9.31. *The prayer of the upright* (saith *Solomon*) *is his delight*.

Secondly, As there is a great deal of prudence to be observed in the choice of Persons, to whom we own and acknowledge our blackness, so there is a great deal of *piety*, and *chari-* Direct. 2.

ty to be shewed *in the manner of the doing of it.* That which of *charity* is to be shewen in it, is to do it *where the Soul* of our *Brother may be advantaged by the performance of it.* That of *piety*, which is to be shewed in its Eyes,

1. *In a right fixing of our end, which ought to be the glory of God*, the general end of all our actions. When *Joshua* exhorted *Achan to confess his sin. My Son* (saith he) *confess, and give glory unto God*; you read in Scripture of a *confession* of the *Lords name, a confession of truth, and a confession of sin.* The glory of God is the end of all (that is the prædication of his glory, for that is all the way we have to glorify God.) A man by confession of his sins, either unto God, or men, may give glory to God, for in confessing himself a sinner, he owned the *Lords Power, and Soveraignty* over him, the *Holiness*, and *Righteousness* of his *Law*, and his *patience, long-suffering*, and goodness, that he is not cut off, and thrown into Hell, and indeed there is no confession of sin our duty, where this end cannot be attained some way or other, God doth not delight in the shame, and confusion of our faces, but he doth delight in the exalting of his own name, and in the prædication of his own praise and glory.

2. Secondly, *Piety* is concerned in the *manner of the action.* So it must be done with tenderness of heart, *brokenness*, and *contrition of Spirit*; indeed without this, the *enumeration*, and *recital* of our *sins*, is but either a *glorying in sin*, or at best but a *formality*, and *shell of duty.* A glorying in sin, is but a glorying in our shame, and what will be far from the Soul of a Child of God. A *formality of duty* is but hypocrisy. It is a great vanity for any Soul to think, that God should be pleased with a meer empty noise of words, which are not expressive of any inward disposition of the heart, in which he hath declared himself pleas'd. Words in prayer, and confession of sins, are our duty, but they must be such words as are thrust out of our lips, by the force of the inward affections of our hearts. If a man confesseth his sin unto God, either publickly or privately, this is requisite. Therefore you shall observe that the main thing which God requires, is our *humbling our selves*; that signifieth the affection of the heart. A man cannot humble himself by the words of his lips, without the inward shame, and brokenness of his Soul. The same thing is necessary in our *confessions* unto men. Under the old law there was *Oyl, and Frankincense* to be poured upon

the

the *Meat Offering* Lev. 2. 2. and several other Offerings as you will read in that Book, but upon the *Sin* Offering there was no *Oyl* nor *Frankincense*, to be put, *Lev.* 5. 11. Oyl signified *Gladness*, hence you read that they used it when they would *make their Face to Shine*; and you read of the *Oyl of Gladness*; the Confession of Sin under the Gospel is a *Sin Offering to God*, and must not be offered, without a suitable sense and Sorrow of Heart. This is a requisite in all Confessions of Sin.

Lastly, We ought with the acknowledgment *of our Blackness*, whether to God, or Man, to join also the acknowledgment of our *Comelines*, so far as God hath made any discovery of it to our Souls: we ought not indeed, to Glory beyond our line and measure, but we ought not to conceal what God hath done for our Souls. In this both the Glory and Honour of God, and the good, and incouragement of our dejected and disconsolate Brethren are both concerned; nor can we imagine, that we should be more concerned, to discover our own vileness and naughtiness, then Gods Grace and Mercy. But of this I shall speak more fully, in my handling the Second part of the Proposition.

Sermon XXXV.

Canticles 1. 5.

I am Black, but Comely, O ye Daughters of Hierusalem, *&c.*

I Come now to the second part of the Proposition I raised from these words, I had no more time in my last discourse then to handle the former.

Prop. *There are times, when Christians are bound to own their graces, and to declare what God hath done for their Souls.*

There are such times, when good Christians must not only say they are *Black*, but also own that they are *Comely*. That this is a

duty, appeareth from the practice of the Servants of God in holy Writ. Psal. 66. 16. *Come* and *hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my Soul.* And indeed what are most of the *Psalms* of *David* but declarations of this nature, to say nothing of *Pauls* speeches before *Festus* and *Agrippa, &c.* But whatsoever I intended for the proof of it, *I* shall bring under the *explication*, applying it to the particular cases. The Question is,

Qu. *When, and in what cases, are Christians concerned, to own, acknowledg, and declare unto others their grace, and what God hath done for their Souls.*

As I said of the other piece of a Christians duty, so I shall say of this. It is their duty 1. To *own* and *acknowledg* it to *God*; 2. *To the Church of God*; 3. *To the Men of the World* sometimes.

1. To God. This is their unquestionable duty at all times, and you shall find it the frequent practice of the Servants of God in Scripture. If we have any Comelineſs, it is Christs Comlineſs put upon us, and it is but reasonable that God should have the acknowledgment of it to his Honor and Glory. But of this there is no question, neither is this the acknowledgment of the Text, she is here speaking not unto God, but to the Daughters of *Jerusalem.* It is our duty also in some cases to own our *Comelineſs* through grace unto men.

2. To *the Church of Christ*, and to *particular Christians*. 1. *To the Church*, and that in two cases. 1. *Upon our Admission* into it. 2. Upon our *Re-admission*, and *restoring to the Priviledges of it*. We find in the first Plantation of Churches of the Gospel, there was ordinarily such a *confession* and *acknowledgment*. It is said *Mat.* 3. That those who were Baptized of *John* were Baptized in *Jordan, confessing their Sins*, Matth. 3. 6. After Christs Ascension into Heaven, we read of the *three thousand Souls*, added to the Church, that they were first *pricked at the Heart*, and said to *Peter* and to *the rest of the Apostles, Men* and *Brethren, what shall we do?* and in *Acts* 8. 36. when the *Eunuch* said to *Philip, Here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip answereth, if thou believeſt with all thine heart thou maieſt*, and *he answered, and said, I beleive that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* In those first admissions into the *Gospel Church*, it is plain, that *Confession of Sin*, and Profession of a *Faith in Christ*, were required as necessary, and previous to *Baptism*, by which Persons were admitted into a fellow-

ship

ſhip with the Church of God. But altho the firſt admiſſion into Goſpel Churches were only of *Grown Perſons*, able to make Confeſſions of their Sins, and a Profeſſion of their faith in Chriſt, which were alwaies done upon ſuch admiſſions: yet the *Children* of ſuch perſons ſo *Baptized* have been alwaies taken to be within the *Covenant* and ſo *Members of the Church* alſo, but whether compleat Members or no, hath been a queſtion, and indeed generally denied, and ſomething further required of them before they have been taken into a full Communion with the Church in the *Ordinance of the Supper*. For that being an Ordinance of the Goſpel, which is a *Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith* (as was ſaid of *Circumciſion* with reference to *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 11.) It is but reaſonable to conclude that none have a right unto it but ſuch as are made *Partakers* of *that Righteouſneſs of Faith*, thoſe that by an eye of Faith can diſcern the Lords Body, by an hand of Faith lay hold upon Chriſt under thoſe ſenſible ſigns, and repreſentations, and that by Faith can Eat the Fleſh and Drink the Blood of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, while with the Mouths of their Bodies they Eat the Bread and Drink the Wine. Hence the Apoſtle commands us to examine our ſelves and *ſo to Eat of that Bread, and Drink of that Cup*, and telleth us that *whoſo Eateth the Fleſh and Drinketh the Blood of the Lord unworthily, Eateth and Drinketh Judgment unto himſelf*: and hence it is that ſome evidence both of *Knowledg*, and *Regeneration* is judged neceſſary to ſuch as have a full Communion in this Ordinance with the Church of Chriſt. The beſt evidence whereof is undoubtedly an holy converſation; That a *verbal declaration* in this caſe is abſolutely neceſſary, I cannot ſay, which may be made in hypocriſie, and if made ſignifies nothing, if not confirmed by an holy Life; where it can be made in truth, and with freedom of Spirit it is doubtleſs exceeding ſatisfactory, both to the Miniſters of Chriſt, who are *Stewards of the Miniſtries of God, of whom it is required that they ſhould be faithful*, (diſtributing their Maſters goods according to their Maſters order) and to the Members of the Church with which they are joined. But I by no means think that it ought to be inſiſted on, as to many Chriſtians who may be under fears, and doubts, and deſpondencies, but evidence the change of their hearts by a holineſs of life. Thus far I have a little digreſſed to give you my judgment in this point. By which you may ſe how little the difference in this caſe is betwixt Brethren, would they calmly liſten to hear and to underſtand one another and not judge each other not heard.

2. *Upon*

2. *Upon our re-admission, or restoring to the Church of God.* The judicial separation of Scandalous persons from the Church, is a sufficient evidence, that no persons unholy in their lives ought to be admitted into a communion with it, and that they are no more then presumptive members of it, or if you will, *visible members*, that is, such as in outward appearance are so, but when by any open action, they discover the contrary, they ought to be separated from it, and not restored without *repentance*, of which *repentance* indeed, (it being the change of the heart) we are no *infallible judges*, having no rule of judgment, but being forced to trust to the *sincerity of Profession*, joined with a *visibly reformed Conversation*. The Church of Christ in all ages, so far as we may trust any account we have had of it, hath required both. 1. A *verbal declaration*, of what God hath done for the offending party, working in him or her a *Godly shame and sorrow*, and besides this the *evidence of a reformed life*, to which purpose, there was a great severity used in the Primitive Church, in case of persons lapsed before they would again receive them into a full communion with them, they would in the case of some Sins have the evidence of a changed heart, from a reformed Life. For 3, 5, 7, 10, 20. Years according to the degree of the Scandal and Offence. Indeed in latter Ages, as *Popery* prevailed upon the World, this discipline degenerated into a strange formality of *auricular Confession*, setting *penances*, and a present *absolution* without any thing more then a perfunctory verbal confession. But *from the beginning it was not so*, neither ought to be so now. When any person, by any *apostacy* or *lapse* declareth, (so far as the Church can judge) either that at first he was no true member of the Church, (however by an error admitted to it) or that at least the Church hath no reason to judge otherwise, so as he be separated from its Communion, he ought not to be restored without such an evidence as may satisfy the Church, that he is one fit to be in full Communion with it, and this evidence can be no other way, then by a *verball declaration*, or by an *holy and reformed conversation*. I think it ought to be by both. Thus, St *Paul* in the case of the *incestuous Person*, whom he had ordered to be cast out of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 5. ordereth the *restoring of him*, but not till he had evidenced his *sorrow*, and that to such a degree, as St. *Paul* was afraid he *should be swallowed* up with *over much sorrow*. 2 *Cor.* 2, 7. & v. 11. *Lest Satan should get an advantage*. These are the two cases in which I conceive *Christians* ought to make no difficulty to acknowledg

ledg their Spiritual *Comeliness* to the *Church of God*, of which they are Members. I have been a little larger in speaking to them, in regard of the questions which have arisen in these times, that I might tell you my judgment as to them, and do what in me lyes to the healing of breaches amongst Brethren, with reference to them, that if possible we might rightly understand one another, and recover the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace.

But besides this more open acknowledgment of what God hath done for us, in order to our more comfortable Communion with the Church of Christ, & participation of all Ordinances of the Gospel with them: I do conceive there are also some cases wherein such a *Declaration*, or owning of what God hath done for us, to particular Christians is our duty: and that,

1. *In case of some particular Scandal.* Suppose a Christian hath taken some particular offence, at some *Scandalous* actions or behaviour of mine, before God wrought a *change in my Heart* or afterward, and can hardly be satisfied that I am now a disciple, but is afraid of fellowship and communion with me in this case, it is doubtless my duty if I know of it, to satisfy him, by declaring to him, what God hath since that time done for my Soul. Thus you read of *Paul*, Acts 9. 26. *Paul* you know was a *Persecutor*, in the beginning of that Chapter, you read of his Fury against the *Christians*, when he came to *Hierusalem* v. 26. *he essaied to join himself to the Disciples*, but, *they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a Disciple*, v. 27. Barnabas *took him*, and *brought him to the Apostles*, and *declared how he had seen the Lord in the way, and how he had spoken to him. Paul* had declared it to *Barnabas*, and doubtless (tho it be not recorded) made a following Declaration himself. Certainly of this there can be no doubt what ever the Scandal be.

But Secondly, *Certainly it is our duty so often, and in any case, as and where we can probably judge that such a Declaration may conduce to the Glory of God, or to the good of other Souls, either in bringing them to God, or exciting them to bless God on our behalf, or to trust in God and in Christ by our example.* The relating, declaring, and telling abroad Gods Wondrous Works is one way by which we Praise and Glorify God, as appears in all the Thanksgivings, and Songs of Praise, which we find in holy Writ, now certainly the Declaration of Gods wonderful Works in the Soul is of a high, and great concern to the Glory of God, as his wonder-

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full works of common Providence in the World, and ought no more to be concealed, nor shall we find in holy Writ that they were. *Come* (saith David) and I will *tell you what God hath done for my Soul*, Psal. 66. 16, 17. *I cryed unto him with my mouth*, and *he was extolled with my tongue*. And possibly you shall find the book of *Psalms* as full of expressions of this, as any other nature. How free in this case is *Paul*? *I live* (saith he) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the Life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God*, 1. Cor. 15. 9, 10. *I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain. But I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* So, *Tim.* 1. 13. *Who was before a Blasphemer a persecutor, injurious.* But *I obtained mercy* — v. 14. *And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, was exceeding abundant by faith in Love which is in Christ Jesus.* So in many other texts.

3. Lastly, There is a time when a Christian will be obliged to *acknowledge his grace, and Spiritual comelines before the men of the World.* That is, *when the World scandalizeth his profession.* This Interpreters judge was the case here, the daughters of *Hierusalem* reproached the Spouse for her *blackness.* Thus Saint *Paul*, then whom none ever spake in a more *vilifying dialect* then himself of himself, yet at other times he *magnified his Office*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. *I am* (saith he) become a *fool in glorying, you have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you, for in nothing am I behind the chiefest of the Apostles, tho I be nothing. Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought amongst you in all patience in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.* So 2 Cor. 11. 25. *For I suppose I was not a whit behind the chiefest of the Apostles, but though I be rude in Speech, yet not in knowledge, but we have been throughly made manifest first amongst you in all things.* When the *Corinthians* sought a *proof of Christ in him*, 2 Cor. 13. 3. he tells them v. 4. *For we are also weak in him, but we shall live with him, by the power of God towards you*, v. 6. *I trust you shall know that we are no reprobates.*

From this discourse may easily be gathered the reasonableness of this duty. There are four things that call to us for it, and make it our duty.

1. The first is the *honour* and *glory of God.* This is the great end of all our actions, for this cause we were born, for this cause

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we came into the World, I have before told you, that we have no other way to glorify God but by the predication, or speaking of his *greatness*, or *goodness*, or some other of his attributes, and by our *holy life and conversation in obedience to his will*: Now of all Gods attributes, there is none wherein he more delighteth then in shewing mercy, and whoso tells of Gods acts of grace doth eminently glorify God, for the riches of his grace and goodness, are discovered in Christ, and as in his giving of Christ for poor lost sinners, so in the application of that purchased redemption to the Souls of his poor creatures. *Bless the Lord O my Soul* (saith *David*) Psal. 103 *v.* 1, 2, 3. *and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, & forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thy iniquities & healeth all thy diseases.*

2. The Second reason is the *good of our Brother*. Next *our immediate magnifying and glorifying of God* there is nothing more our duty, then the consulting the good of our Brethren, and he is highly serviceable to God, who is any way serviceable to the Souls of others, either in winning them to God, or advantaging them in their walking with God. The Souls of Christians have often great advantages by hearing what God hath done for the Souls of others in their circumstances. It incourageth them to make their applications to God, to hope, and trust in his mercy to wait untill he will be pleased in like manner to be gracious to them. *David Psal.* 69. 32. makes this as an argument, with which he pleadeth with God for mercy for his Soul. He promiseth first, *v.* 30. *That he would praise the Lord with a song and magnify him with thanksgiving.* then he addeth *v.* 32. *The humble shall see this, and be glad and your hearts shall live that seek God, for the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his Prisoners.* By the humble is to be understood (as in many other Texts of Scripture) Persons in low, mean and afflicted conditions. It much conduceth to the raising up of the Spirits of a man, under torments of bodily pain and affliction, if one comes and tells him, I was in the same condition, and had the same pain, yet I by such and such applications recovered, and it is of no less usefulness, to one of a poor, and broken Spirit, for one to come to him, under his doubts and fears, and despondency because of the guilt of sin, when another Christian comes to him, and tells him, I also was a blasphemer, a drunkard, an injurious Person, yet I obtained mercy. I bless God my doubts are resolved, my fears scattered, and I am inabled through grace to hope in the

free grace and mercy of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Wher now such an opportunity as this is (which is not very frequent) there the good of our Brother calls to us for such a declaration, what God hath done for our Souls.

3. A third reason is the *duty of a Christian* so far as he may to *avoid Scandal* and *Offence*. Offences and mutual dissatisfactions one in another, destroy all the freedom, and sweetness of Christians communion each with other, and it is our duty so to walk as to give no offence, to *Jews* or *Gentiles*, much less *to the Church of God* 2.*Cor* 20.32. There are two ways by which offence is given.

1. By *doing some actions as to which we are at a perfect liberty by which we cause our Brother to sin against God:* As to these the Apostle cautioneth Christians very largely both in his Epistle to the *Romans* and to the *Corinthians*: But these kind of offences are not obviated by Christians declarations of what God hath done for their Souls, as to the influences of saving grace: but rather by the declaration of his *knowledge*, and forbearing such actions, as he hath a liberty to, but no necessity that presseth him to the doing of them, at least till his Brother be Satisfyed in the lawfulness of them.

2. By some *Scandalous actions*; these indeed are *Scandala data*, Scandals that are given and such sores as a Christian ought by all means in his power to endeavour healing of, and whether such things have been done before, or after a change wrought in our hearts, it is our duty to do what in us lyeth to remove the Scandal of them, which I know not how it can at first be done, without some declaration to the party, or Church offended, what God hath done for us, what a change he hath wrought in us, until by a contrary conversation (which is a work of time & the best evidence) we can make it more really to appear to them.

4. Lastly. The *Credit of our professions* some times calls to us for it; and this is the reason of the *performance of this duty* with reference *to the men of the World*, who seek all advantages to reproach the good and right ways of the Lord. But this is enough to have spoken *doctrinally* upon this argument.

Use. 1. From hence (in the first place) we may observe. *That a Child of God may know that he, or she is comely.* Indeed this is not the lot of every Child of God, at all times, and for them that do know it, there are degrees of their knowledge. Some have a more, some a less certain knowledge, but I say a good

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Christian may know it. The *Papists* indeed make all a Christians faith to be languid, and uncertain, but *Paul* was perſwaded, that *nothing ſhould ſeparate him from the Love of God.* The Spouſe knew ſhe was *ſick of Love*, and here, that altho ſhe was *black*, yet ſhe was alſo *comely*, tho as the tents of *Kedar*, yet as the *Curtains of Solomon alſo. Peter* knew that he *loved his Maſter*, ſo as he durſt appeal to him, and ſay. *Thou that knoweſt all things knoweſt that I Love thee*; and St. *John* giving us rules how we might know that we are *tranſlated from death to Life*, ſuppoſed that it might be known, and if it had not been poſſible ſurely *Peter* would not have quickened us to the uſe of all diligence *to make our calling and election ſure.* That every good Chriſtian doth not *certainly know* his *Spiritual Eſtate*, is unqueſtionable; That he *who doth know it* this day, may fall into doubts and fears concerning it, is alſo certain: But it is as plain in Scripture, that a *Chriſtian* may walk in the ſenſe and view of his own ſincerity, and uprightneſs, he may know it by the more *ſpecial influence of the holy Spirit*, which *witneſſeth with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God*, and this is of all other, the moſt certain and comfortable knowledge. He may alſo know it, by the more ordinary influence of the Spirit of grace, ſupporting the Soul, in the view of its own habits of grace. And certainly a good Chriſtian is highly concerned to labour after this knowledge, as for the Quiet, Peace and Satisfaction of his own Spirit ſo for the glory of God, the good of others, and the upholding of our ſelves againſt the calumnies, and reproaches of evil men: How ſhall a Chriſtian, that is full of fears, and continually doubting, whether God hath done any thing for his Soul or no, ever give God the honour and glory of what he hath done for him, and wrought in him. A ſad, and dejected Spirit can never walk thankfully and praiſe God, for what he hath done for him: how ſhall ſuch a Soul be ſerviceable to his Brother in diſtreſs! The Apoſtle adviſeth working with our hands that we may have ſomething to give to thoſe that need, and tells us, It is more noble to give then to receive; the deſpondent, doubting Chriſtian is always a receiver he cannot be a giver of advice and counſel, to others, How ſhall ſuch a Chriſtian bear up againſt the ſuggeſtions of the Devil, or againſt the reproaches, Scandals, and calumnies of the men of the World: Upon all theſe and many more accounts, Chriſtians are highly concern-

ed, to look for such evidences as may satisfy them that altho they have been black, and are black through the frequent renewings of corruption, yet they are comely through grace. If any ask what they should do that they may know, I know no better way, then the studying the perfection of the new creature to *perfect holiness in the Lords fear*; for tho it be true that we may be deceived in our judgments of the true features of the new creature, yet it is also true that the true *testimony of the Spirit*, is in *concurrence* with *the witness of our Spirits* and where there is a faileur of that *Testimony* there can be no *certainty* of the other.

Use. 2. We may learn from hence that it is not *the sole work of a Christian to be complaining of himself, and loading himself with accusations, and charges of blackness. Solomon* saith, *there is a time for all things; A time to weep* and *a time to laugh a time to mourn*, and a *time to dance. Eccles.* 3.2.4. I would have Christians to consider their *seasons*. There is a time for him to consider his *blackness* and to *weep for it*; And there is also a time for him to own and acknowledge his comliness. There is a time for him to *sit alone*, and *keep silence and put* his *mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope*; But he ought also to find a time to lift up his head, to bless God that *he lives*, tho yet it is not he, but the grace of God in him, to acknowledge that by *Grace he is what he is*, and that the grace of God hath not been bestowed on him in vain. The time for the former, should be the time of his *Solitude*, chiefly when he sitteth alone before God. Except in some other particular cases which I instanced in while I was handling the former part of this Proposition. God is indeed honoured by our *humiliations, confessions of sin, shamings* of our *own Souls:* but not so much as by the predication of the riches of his grace. Thankfulness, and rejoicing in the Lord, and in his Salvation, are great pieces of duty. The weeping, dejected Christian doth not so much predicate the Lords glory, nor so much commend the ways of God to men, as the rejoicing, chearful Christian, provided his rejoycing be not carnal, and sensual, but *Spiritual* and in the Lord. That is the conversation, which most commendeth God, and his ways, and most inviteth Souls into a walking in them.

Use. 3. Suffer therefore a word of *Exhortation* and with that I shall shut up this discourse, it must be to a *declaration of what God hath done*

done for your Souls. A declaration of it (I mean) where God calleth to you for it. When that is may easily be concluded from my former discourse. It is always your duty unto God, when you are alone in your Closets, it is never unseasonable. It is (as you have heard) oft-times your duty to do it unto men, to the Church of which you are Members, to particular Christians whoare your Companions, sometimes before the world. Four things are usually pleaded as hinderances of it. 1. *Christians uncertainty.* 2. *Modesty.* 3. *Pride.* 4. *Novelty of such a practice.* 1. I will endeavour to shew you the vanity of these pleas in bar to this duty. 2. I shall give you some directions in order to the performance of it, with which I shall conclude this discourse.

1. The first plea is *Christians own incertainty*, and this is indeed a great plea, for no man ought to boast beyond his line, or to arrogate that to himself, which he doth not find in himself, we ought therefore to labour to bring our Souls to a certainty, and the doubting Christian hath this advantage, that the greatest certainty is that which followeth doubting but though it may be thou hast not an infallible certainty, yet possibly thou hast a *moral certainty*, though not a certainty free from all doubts, and fears, yet not incumbred with strong doubts, and tormenting fears, though not an assurance, yet a good hope through grace, yea, such an hope as shall not make ashamed. Thou mayest declare how it is with thy Soul, though thou canst not declare what is not in thy Soul. I am not pressing any Christian to arrogate to himself, what there is no ground for, but only to own in himself, what God hath wrought in him, and for him. *Fears*, and *doubts*, though they always argue a weakness in faith, yet they ordinarily argue a truth of grace, and faith, it may be, because of thy clouds, and doubts, thou canst see no beauty and comeliness in thy self, yet others may see a great beauty and comeliness in thee.

2. A second plea is *Modesty*, a vertue which excellently becometh the Children of God, who are called Virgins. It is the duty of the Children of God, not to think of themselves above what they ought to think, it is pity that so comely an habit should be turned into sin, and that Christians under pretence of avoiding Pride, and Ostentation, should run upon another Rock, and neglect a duty of so much tendency as I have shewed this to be, to the glory of God, and the good of others. Let me there-

therefore examine this a little strictly. *Pride* (saith the *Philosopher*) *is a vice by which we judge our selves worthy of more honour then indeed we are, and slight, or despise others who indeed have, or whom at least we judge to have more of this, or that perfection then we have.* The *Schoolmen* tell us there are three ways by which we may discover this sinful tumor, or swelling in an opinion of our selves.

Aqu. 228. in 62. art. 4.

1. *When we judge those good things to be from our selves, which we indeed have but from above.*

2. *When we boast our selves to have some good, or some measures of good, and perfection which we have not.*

3. *When we slight, and despise others whom we judge to come short of our perfections.* They likewise prescribe a threefold remedy for this distemper. 1. *The consideration of our native weakness and infirmity.* 2. *The consideration of the infinite greatness, and perfection of God.* 3. *The consideration of our own gifts and graces, in the shortness, and imperfections of them.* In short therefore, there is no need to fear the discovery of any Pride in the acknowledgment of what God hath done for us, provided,

1. That we do not *play the Hypocrites*, boasting beyond our *line*, of what we never experienced, what God never wrought in us. The proud man arrogateth more to himself, then doth belong unto him.

2. *Provided, that thou doest intitle God to all that thou hast of good in thee.* It is truly said by the Schoolmen. *Cum aliquis æstimat bonum quod habet ab alio, ac si haberet a seipso, fertur per consequens appetitus ejus supra modum in propriam excellentiam*: That is; If a man judgeth that, that good which he hath from another, proceedeth from himself, his desire is immoderately carried out after his own excellency, and this is Pride. They are therefore highly concerned to look to themselves as to this, that attribute so much to the *power of mans will*, without any influence of special, and distinguishing grace; you shall observe how careful St. *Paul* was against this upon all occasions, where he mentioneth his grace. *I live* (saith he) *but yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God. I was a Persecutor, a Blasphemer, Injurious, but I obtained mercy, and the grace of the Lord was exceedingly abundant in me, with faith, and love, which is in Christ Jesus. I am the least of the Apostles, not worthy to be called an Apostle--*

postle--But by the Grace of God I am what I am. It is no pride to acknowledge what God hath given us, and done for us, but to arrogate it to our selves, as done by our own power, this is pride.

3. *Provided* (3dly,) *That thou dost not despise the day of small things in the Souls of others*: Scorning, contemning, and despising those, for whom God hath done, or we think that he hath done less then he hath done for us. This will speak *Pride*, the proud Soul as he alwaies arrogateth too much to himself, so he alwaies giveth too little to his Brother, and haughtily over-looketh what he hath, so that his Brother alwaies seems low, and vile in his Eyes.

4. Lastly, Provided, *That with the acknowledgment of thy perfections, and graces, thou conjoyneſt an admiration of Gods goodneſs, an acknowledgment of thy unworthineſs, and of thy ſinful failings, and imperfections.* Thus you see the Spouse doth in this Text. *I am black* (saith she) *but comely.* So did *Paul* in the places I before quoted.

3. A third Bar to this is *Novelty.* This can only be pleaded with reference to our acknowledgments to the Church, or the Officers of it, with respect to our either being admitted into a full communion with it in all Ordinances, or being restored to it after some lapse for the more private practice of it to our Brethren, it is as old as *David*, as may be seen from *Psal.66. v.16,17.* As to the former, it was from the beginning certainly thus. None were admitted into the Gospel Church without a profession of *repentance*, and *faith in Christ.* None after a lapse or Apostacy was restored to the Church without it. Indeed through the corruption of times, both the one and the other practice, hath degenerated into a meer formality, and now it seemeth new to us. But as it is but a reduction of an *Apostolical, and Primitive Practice*, so there certainly is nothing more reasonable, both for the comfort of the particular Soul, from whom this declaration is desired, and for the satisfaction of the Minister of Christ, who is but a Steward of the mysteries of Christ, and ought to be faithful, and also for the mutual satisfaction of such as are to be Members of the same Body.

4. But lastly, (whatever is pretended) it is much to be feared that *Pride* is the true hinderance of this Christian, and Spiritual duty. 1. *Either we think it beneath us to discourse of spiri-*

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tual things, and to acknowledge all to the free grace of God: Or, 2. *We think we come short of some perfections which others have attained, and we are ashamed to let others know how short we are.* But O that Christians would grow more *familiar* with spiritual things. We think that it is a piece of Charity if we hear of a Neighbour that is full of pain, or very *sick* of such a distemper as we have formerly laboured under, to goand tell him how we were, what we did, what effect and issue it had, but we find an awkness to relate to fellow Christians, how we lay labouring under the guilt of sin, and perplexities of conscience, and burthens of temptations, and what our applications to God were, and what reslef we found from his free grace and mercy. But in the performance of this, as well as other duties, there may be miscarriages. Let me therefore conclude with offering some directions for the better management of this duty. They shall be three.

1. *Take heed to the principle moving thee to such actions.* That must be *love to God* (the principle of all religious actions, without which we do nothing acceptably, this is determined by the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2. *It is love that is the fulfilling of the law*, and indeed we can no otherwise in any point fulfil it. Take heed that *self-love* be not the principle, if by it thou seekest thy honour and praise; *self love* only principleth thee, but if thou dost it, that God may have the glory of his Grace, that the Souls of others may be profited, and advantaged. That offences may be prevented, or removed. That the dirt may be wiped off, which the world throweth upon profession. In these cases the love of God is thy principle.

2. *Take heed to the manner of thy doing it.* As to that I shall only hint 2 things.

1. *See that God hath all the glory.* It is lawful for thee to *boast of the Grace of God*, but you must be sure to *boast in the Lord*, and in all thy acknowledgments of any spiritual good, thou oughtest to sing with *David*, Psal. 115. 1. *Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be given the Glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth sake.*

2. *Do it with all the greatest lowliness, and humility of mind and expression that thou art able*, so as none may for what thou hast received of grace, *think of thee above what he ought to think*; *Paul* forbare to speak what he could have spake, after his rapture

more into the third Heavens, 2 *Cor.* 12. 6. *Left* (as he saith) *any should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or that he heareth of me.* We are to have a care of the corruptions of others hearts, as well as our own.

3. *Look to the simplicity of thy heart in the end of thy action.* This will indeed be much regulated from the *principle*; if the principle be true, the end will be so. A man can do nothing out of a true principle of love to God, but his end will be the honour, and glory of God; if the principle be *self-love*, the end will be our own honour, praise, and applause, to have the reputation of a religious man in the world, and to appear to be what indeed we are not. Now if thy end be the *honour and glory of God*, you have heard, that is no other way attainable, but either by the predication of his *goodness*, or by the *doing of his will*, either in the doing good to others, or the preventing of scandals and offences, or upholding the credit, and reputation of Religion, *&c.* But of all these things I have discoursed more fully before.

Sermon XXXVI.

Cant. 1. 6.

Look not upon me because I am black, &c.

I Have done with the four first *Propositions*, which I observed in these two verses. I come to the fifth from those words, *Look not upon me because I am black.* Where the *Spouse* (or rather the Holy Ghost by her) doth not forbid all looking upon the Spouse (whether we understand the Church, or the particular believing Soul (in the day of her blackness, but some particular *lookings.* And this is very usual in Scripture to deliver Propositions *generally*, which yet must be understood in a limited, and restrained sense, of which a multitude of instances might be given, *Mat.* 18. 3. *Except you be converted, and become*

come as little Children, (that is, in some things as *little Children*) *you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* So where Christ saith, *my Doctrine is not mine*, the meaning is, *not mine alone*; and again, *If I give testimony of my self*; that is, if I alone gave testimony of my self, *my testimony is not true.* So often in *precepts*, and *exhortations*, *when thou makest a feast* (saith our Saviour, *Luk.* 14. 12.) *call not thy Friends, or thy Brethren, or thy Kindred*; that is, not them alone. There is nothing more ordinary in the phrase of Scripture, and particularly in *exhortations*, or *prohibitions*. So here when she saith, *Look not upon me*, her meaning is not to dissuade all intuition, and beholding her in her *blackness*, but to caution us how to *look upon her*; hence the *Proposition* was:

Prop. *It is our duty to take heed how we look upon the Church, or the particular Child of God, because they are black.*

What the blackness of the Church, or of the particular Soul is, I have heretofore largely discoursed. Both of them are black *through Afflictions*, and black through *Corruptions*; the *Corruptions* of particular Souls are *personal*, the *Corruptions* of the Church are the *Corruptions* of the body *collective*, through the mixture of *undue*, and *corrupt Teachers*, or Members; the reception of false and erroneous Doctrine, idolatrous, or superstitious *Worship*, or Rites, *&c.* In some sense we may not be able to avoid looking upon them, as looking signifies no more then the casting of our Eyes upon obvious *objects* that are before us. In some sense it is our duty to *look upon them*, to pity and compassionate them, and contribute what we are able toward their help, and recovery. But in other senses it *is our sin to look upon them.* The business as to which I am to instruct you under this Proposition, is how truly to divide betwixt our duty, and our sin in this case.

The Eyes are the windows of the Soul, through which most of our *affections*, and *passions* shew themselves. *Pride* discovereth itself by the *Eye*, hence you read of a Generation, *whose Eyes are lofty*, *Prov.* 30. 13. and *David* saith of himself, *O Lord, mine heart is not haughty, nor my Eyes lofty*, Psal. 131. 1. *Love* and *wantonness* discovereth itself *by the Eye.* Hence *Peter* tells us

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of *Eyes full of Adultery*, and *Job* tells us, he had *made a covenant* with his *Eyes*, that he *would not look upon a Maid*. *Covetousness*, and *immoderate desires* discover themselves by the Eye, *Prov.* 27. 29. *The Eyes of man are never satisfied.* The *joy*, *pleasure*, *and satisfaction* of the Soul, are discerned by the Eye. *Mine Eyes also shall see my desire on my Enemies*, Psal. 92. 11. *Hope* looketh through the Eye, hence *David* expresseth his hope in God, by the action of his Eyes, *Mine Eyes are towards the Lord*, *Psal.* 25. 15. and in many other Texts. Pity, sorrow and compassion are discovered, and expressed by the Eye. The Eyes for sorrow wax dim, and *run down with tears*. The outward man moveth according to the bent, and inclination of the *will* and affections; as a mans will stands bent, and his affections are inclined, so he moveth, so he acteth, and this will of man, and his affections discovering themselves by the Eye. The motions of that are made use of in Scripture to express the several affections, and inclinations of the Soul of man. The Spouse in this Text must not be understood to caution the Daughters of *Hierusalem* against the natural motions of their Eyes, with reference to her. But,

1. *Against those unkind affections towards her, which were not suitable to her state and condition.*

2. Against those unkind *effects*, and *actions*, *which ordinarily follow such affections.*

I put in those words [unkind] and [unsuitable] because there are *affections*, and *actions*, which are our duties towards the Spouse in the day of her *blackness*. This will lead me to discourse two points under this Proposition.

1. *The duty of Christians towards the Church of Christ, black with Afflictions, or through sinful mixtures and corruptions*; and towards particular Christians under *afflictions*, or *lapses*.

2. *How Christians may so in their behaviours towards one, or the other, under such circumstances.*

First, Let me speak as to what is a Christians duty in the case; that I shall resolve in this general position, *That it is a Christians duty sincerely to look upon the Church, and the particular Christian in the day of their blackness, as they may be thereby affected with that due compassion which they owe unto their Brethren, and quickened to those acts which brotherly love, and compassion calleth to them for.* Thus not to look upon the Spouse, because she is black, is our sin. So that the duty of a Christian here lieth in two or three things.

1. *In a sympathy, or fellow feeling of a Churches, or Christians burdens, and misery.* The Eye naturally affects the heart, according to the nature of the object which it seeth. Nature itself teacheth a sympathy betwixt members of the same body. No one member can be *afflicted*, or *pained*, but the whole body feeleth it, and hath some sense of it. The Apostle hath compared the Church (the Body of Christ) to the Body natural, for the *order* of the Parts and Members, the several offices of the Members, the mutual subserviency of one Member to another, and that *sympathy* which should be found betwixt the Members. Hence we are commanded by the Apostle, *to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those that weep*, and *Paul* saith of himself, *who is weak, and I am not weak, who is offended, and I burn not?* and again we are commanded to *remember those who are in bonds, as if we were bound with them, and those that suffer adversity, as being our selves in the Body.* So that, 1. *The precept of God obligeth us to it*, who having made his people all one Body hath made them also Members each of other. 2. *Their relation calleth to them for it.* It seems to be the law of nature upon all *near relations*, for it is not only where (as in natural Bodies) the natural union is made by Nerves, and Sinews, but where love hath made an union, as in the union betwixt Parents, and Children, Husbands, and Wives, &c. Nor is this to be extended only to such cases where the person beloved feels a burthen, or misery, but where they lie under it, though they be not sensible of it, what Husband, or Wife is not affected with the affliction of their correlate in an Apoplexy, or under some distempers, of which themselves possibly have little or no sense. So will every good Christian be affected at the case of his Brother fallen, tho he possibly hath not that due sense of his own fall, which he should have, and at the case of the Church, under its blackness, though possibly the Rulers, or generality of the Members, be not so sensible of their own corruptions, and deviations, and to look upon the Spouse of Christ in her *blackness*, with a mournful, pitying, and compassionate Eye, is very much the duty of every good Christian, and what we find the constant, and religious practice of the People of God at all times.

2. *We may so far look upon the Spouses blackness, as our sight of it may inform us better, or quicken us to seek God on her behalf.* It is our duty to pray for one another, *James* 5. 15. *Confess your*

faults

faults one to another, and pray one for another. They are put together, and the first seemeth to be mentioned as a means in order to the other. How can I plead for a Church, or a particular Child of God, if I know nothing of their state? how can I know it, if I may not look upon it? It is a divine indulgence granted by God to his People, that they shall not be heard only praying for themselves, but for their Brethren also, 1 John 5.16. *If any man see his Brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give them life for them who sin not unto death.* All a Christians sins in their own nature are mortal, and unto death. The *Papists* err in their distinction of sins into such as are *mortal*, and such as are *venial*, but no sin is *mortal*, in that sense as it signifies, what cannot be forgiven (saving only the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, mentioned by our Saviour,) and in respect of Gods gracious Ordination, no Child of God sinneth, or can sin unto death. Now where the sin is not unto death, God hath promised us, on the behalf of our Brethren, that if we see them sinning, and pray for them, their sins shall be forgiven them. Now if they may not look upon them in any sense, or to any purpose, how should they pray for them? And thus it is highly the duty of Gods People to look both upon the Church, and the People of God, because of their blackness through *affliction*. *Is any man afflicted* (saith James 5. 14.) *let him pray, and let them send for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over them -- and the prayer of the faithful shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he hath committed sin, it shall be forgiven him.* In this sense it is so far from being Christians sin, that it is their duty to look upon the Spouse, *because she is black.*

3. Lastly, It is Christians duty to look upon the *Spouse, because she is black, so far as to inable us in any measure to the purging out their corruptions.* A good Christian ought so far to consider the corruptions of a Church, as in his place to endeavour its reformation; and consequently it cannot be his duty to have communion with her in those things wherein she deviateth from the rule of her Lord. It is true, the effectual Authoritative Reformation of a *National Church*, belongeth to the Rulers, if they be Christians, as appeareth by all the instances of the Old Testament, concerning the Kings of *Judah*, and such a Reformation of a particular Church or Congregation, belongeth to the *Officers of Christ in it*, but every private Christian hath his part,

viz.

viz. to inform ſuch, in whom the power is, to bear a teſtimony againſt ſuch corruptions, and not to have fellowſhip with the Church in ſuch things. I cannot grant that all *Corruptions*, in the *Doctrine*, *Worſhip*, or *Diſcipline of a Church*, are a ſufficient cauſe to conclude it no true Church, and wholly to withdraw himſelf from the communion of it. But I doubt not to ſay, that it is my duty to withdraw Communion from a Church in ſuch acts, as without ſin I cannot have communion with it; but of this more by and by. The caſe is the ſame in the caſe of a *lapſed Brother*, I am bound to *admoniſh him*, to tell him of his offence, and if he will not hear me to take two or three with me. If he will not hear them to tell the Church, that he might be ſeparated from the Communion of it. The Apoſtle hath directed us, *If our Brother be overtaken with a fault, to reſtore him in the Spirit of meekneſs, Gal.* 6. 1. Now in order to the performance of this, I may, yea, it is my duty to look upon my *Brother* when he is *black*, for the Lord who hath willed the end, muſt be underſtood to have alſo willed the means, that are neceſſary to that end.

Let me in the next place ſhew you what kind of looking on the Spouſe in her blackneſs is ſinful; this I ſhall more largely open in ſeveral particulars.

1. Firſt, *We ought not to look upon them with a cenſorious, and condemning Eye.* Neither for their *ſeeming blackneſs* through *Afflictions*, nor yet for their *real blackneſs* through *corruption*, either breaking out of a Chriſtians heart, or appearing in a *Church*. *Judge not* (ſaith our Saviour, *Luk.* 6. 37.) *and you ſhall not be judged, condemn not, and you ſhall not be condemned.* He that judgeth the truth of a Chriſtians Grace, or of a Churches ſtate, from the more external providences of God, either towards the one, or towards the other, doth not conſider what hath been the lot of the Church, and People of God, ever ſince God had a Church, or a Believer upon the Earth; nor what the Scripture ſpeaketh concerning ſuch providences. He that condemneth, and caſteth off a Church as no *true Church*, for ſome *particular Corruptions*, and undue mixtures, doth not conſider the ſtate of the *Jewiſh Church*, which yet God owned, and Chriſt owned, by having communion with the Aſſemblies of it in thoſe things which were of his Fathers inſtitution in it: nor yet the ſtate of the *Church* at *Rome*, and that in *Galatia*, and *Corinth*, all which had their Corruptions, and undue mixtures, yet are owned by God

and

and Christ as true Churches. Where indeed Idolatry is owned in the Doctrine of a Church, and ordinarily practiſed in the Worſhip of a Church, or eſtabliſhed as the Worſhip of it, I cannot well tell what to ſay, I do not find that Idolatry was ever eſtabliſhed as the Worſhip of the Church of God in *Judah*, tho I find it ſeveral times tolerated, and during ſome wicked Princes, reigns practiſed amongſt them, but not univerſally, nor ſo ſteddily, but a ſucceeding Prince quickly revived the true Worſhip of God, and deſtroyed the Idols. Idolatry ſeems to be that ſin which unchurcheth a Church, and makes a People not to be owned by God as his People, but that a Church ſhould be condemned as no true Church, where this is not found, is more then I can find in Holy Writ, tho there may be in a Church not ſo far corrupted, a great many corruptions, in which it may be a Chriſtians duty not to join with them; where Chriſt is owned, and the truths of God neceſſary to be known, and believed in order to ſalvation, are owned and publiſhed, and the main acts of Divine Worſhip are performed, there is ſome *comelineſs*. So far a particular Chriſtian, though we ſee ſome particular failings in him, and ſuch as may juſtify the ſeparation of him from a Church, as a ſuſpected Leper, yet we ought to take heed of looking upon him with too *cenſorious* an *Eye*, to reſtore him in the Spirit of meekneſs, leſt we alſo be tempted.

2. We ought not to look upon them *with a glad, and ſatisfied Eye*. It is inhumane to rejoice in the afflictions of any, but irreligious to rejoice in the *afflictions of any belonging to God*. This was the ſin of the *Edomites*, for which God ſo ſeverely threatned them by *Obadiah*, *v.* 12. of his Prophecy; *Thou ſhouldſt not have looked on in the day of thy Brother, in the day that he became a ſtranger, neither ſhouldeſt thou have rejoyced over the Children of* Judah, and to the ſame purpoſe, *Ezek.* 35. 15. *As thou didſt rejoice at the inheritance of the Houſe of* Iſrael, *becauſe it was deſolate, ſo will I do unto thee, thou ſhalt be deſolate*, and *v.* 14. *When the whole Earth rejoyceth, I will make thee deſolate*. I fear there is too much of this ill humour in the world, ſuch an hatred to thoſe that fear God, and thoſe Churches which walk moſt ſtrictly up to the rule of the Goſpel, as produceth a joy and rejoycing, when we hear that any evil betideth them. We ought to be very careful of our ſelves, as to this, this is very far from *weeping with thoſe that weep*; but much leſs ought we to be glad, and rejoice in the ſinful falls of profeſſors, and

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miscarriages of such as have had a repute for religion and godliness. Nothing is more against *Piety* and *Charity*. The honour, and glory of God is as much concerned in the sins of others, as it is in our own sins, and we ought no more to glory in the shame of others, then in our own shame. There is a double rejoycing in the sins of others. The first is a *rejoycing of wantonness*, when men out of a meer idle wanton humor can please themselves, and others with discourses of Mens and Womens failings. The second is a rejoycing of *envy, and malice*, when men envy good men their honour, and repute in the world, and therefore *watch for their halting* (as *Jeremiah* 20. v. 10.) and rejoice when they are fallen. All rejoycing in iniquity, all looking upon others to that end, or of which, that is an effect, is highly sinful, as being against Piety, a rejoycing in Gods dishonour, and against *Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 6, a rejoycing in an evil befallen to thy Brother. Take heed therefore of this looking upon the Spouse, and this is too too frequent, and no more then hath always been in the world, which alwaies lay in wickedness, and from *Abels* time was alwaies filled with malice against them that loved and feared God, *David* deprecates it, *Psal.* 35. 19. *Let not those that are mine Enemies wrongfully rejoice over me, neither let them wink with the Eye that hate me without a cause.* v. 21. *They opened their mouth wide against me*, and said, *Aha, Aha, our Eye hath seen it.* And *David* prayeth bitterly against such a generation; *Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame, that say unto me Aha, Aha*; and so again, *Psal.* 70. *v.* 3. *Ham* rejoyced in his Fathers nakedness, how dreadfully did the Lord revenge it upon him and his Posterity, according to the prophetical *Curse* of his Father? *Gen.* 9. 25, 26. I have, not without trembling, seen People make *sport* at the *natural defects* of Persons, so reproaching God in his works of nature, and providence, whereas they ought rather to bless God upon such sights, who might have made them like unto such imperfect Creatures. Nor without more trembling sometimes seen, and heard men rejoice, and make themselves sport with the *moral defects, and prosanenes of others*, their *Oaths*, and Curses, and Drunkenness, and ribauldry, whereas they ought rather to mourn for the dishonour of God, and that such things might be taken away from persons who call themselves *Christians*; it argues a very corrupt Soul to rejoyce in the sins of any, but to be pleased

sed to rejoice, and be glad at the stumblings, and falls of Persons that make a profession of Godliness, is yet more sinful, because God by such sins hath more dishonour, and such rejoycing can proceed from no other root, but that of hatred to God, and *envy* and *malice*. Thirdly,

3. We ought not to look upon the Spouse, because she is black, with a *scornful and despising Eye*. The *Psalmist* complaineth, *Psal.* 123. *v.* 4. *Our Soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.* And Psal. 79. 4. *We are become a reproach to our Neighbours, a scorn and derision to those who are round about us.* So Psal. 44. 14. *Thou makest us a reproach to our Neighbours, a scorn and a derision to those that are round about us.* The occasion of scorn is *blackness*, either caused through *affliction*, or through *temptations*, and fallings by the prevalence of corruptions. *Job* complained, *Job* 16. 20. *That his friends scorned him, while his Eyes poured out tears unto God*, The Church in her *blackness* was thus *despised*, *Lam.* 1. 8. so was Christ himself, *Is.* 53. 3. But how far is this from the duty of Christians? where is the scorners *Brotherly love* and *compassion*? how doth he forget that himself also is in the body, and may be tempted? Affliction is what may befall the best of men, and who can scorn and despise a Christian fallen through infirmity, and temptation, that considers how *David* and *Peter* fell, and that himself standeth by Grace, and that the reason of his standing, is because God keepeth off from him the like temptations that others meet with?

4. It is our duty not so to look upon the Spouse in the day of her blackness, as because of it to be *scared from her company, to shun, and avoid her, and to withdraw our selves from her, either from advising, and counselling her in order to her cleansing, or doing what in us lieth in order to it.* Solomon saith, *A friend loveth at all times, and a Brother is born for adversity.* If there were no obligation upon us from any religious bond, or relation, yet our participation of the same common humane nature ought to oblige us to pity, counsel, advise, and what we can to help Persons in distress; but *Religion* lays yet an higher tie upon us, as it obligeth more *specially* to love the Church, and to love the Brethren, and to be Friends to those that are Christs Friends, now a Friend loveth at all times. Our Saviour in the Parable of him that *fell amongst Thieves*, *Luke* 20. 31. determines him no *Neigh-*

bone that seeing the man *stripped of his rayment*, and *wounded*, and *half dead*, came and only *looked on him*, and *passed on the other side*; much less can such a one call himself a friend. God by *Obadiah* tells the *Edomites*, *v.* 11. of *their standing on the other side*, when the *strangers* carried the Jews away into captivity. Nor are we only obliged to this in case of the Spouses blackness through affliction, but through sin also, and corruption, and that both in the case of the particular *Christian*, and of the Church of God; let me a little inlarge upon this because I fear there is too much failing of Christians upon this account.

1. In the *case of the particular Christian*. It is true there may be such faileurs of particular persons as may oblige conscientious Christians to shun an intimacy with them; *I have written to you*, saith the *Apostle*, 1. *Cor* 5. 11, *not to keep company, if any man be called a Brother, be a fornicator*, or *covetous*, or an *Idolater*, or *a railer*, or *a drunkard*, or *an extortioner, with such a one no not to Eat*; 2. *Thessal.* 3. 14. *If any man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*. But observe the next words, *yet count him not as an Enemy, but admonish him as a Brother*. I ought not wholly to withdraw my self from that man who may have so fallen, as it may be my sin to have an intimacy of fellowship and communion with him: I ought not to *count him as an Enemy*, whom yet I may not make my intimate, and bosom friend, but what I can do, by counsel and advice, by reproofs and admonitions in order to his recovery, I am bound not to neglect so as I ought not wholly to withdraw my self from him.

2. In the case of a Church, *black through corruption*, the admission of undue *mixtures* of *members*, of *erroneous doctrine*, *Superstitious rites*, &c. it is undoubtedly our duty not to defile our selves by communion with her in those things wherein her blackness appeareth. But it is also our duty not so to withdraw from it, as to lend it none of our help; There is indeed a time when God saith of a Church, *Wherefore come out from amongst them, and be you separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and you shall be my Sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty*. God said so to the Jews when *Jeroboam* set up the *Calves* at *Dan* and *Bethel*. The honest *Priests* and *Levites* resorted to *Judah out of all their coasts, leaving their suburbs, and possessions*, and *after them out of all the*

tribes

tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to Sacrifice to the Lord God of their Fathers, 2. Chron. 11. 16. But where God hath not said to a People, you are not my People, where *Idolatry* is not crept into the *Worship* of a Church, nor such *errors in Doctrine*, as destroy the foundations of faith and repentance, tho it may be the duty of Christians, not to be so blind as not to see manifest errors and corruptions, and to mourn for them, yet it is also their duty not so to look upon them, as wholly to shun communion with such a Church, so far as Christ owns it and to put themselves out of the obligations of charity and brotherly Love, or to think themselves discharged from such obligations; all the diseases, and wounds of Churches are not incurable, and we ought so far as we can to attend, and indeavour the cure of them. It is indeed a sad case, when a Church is so far corrupted as to its *officers* and *members*, as a Christian can see no hope of a reduction of it to the divine rule, but certainly a great deal of waiting and patience in this case is our duty, tho that a Christian can be obliged all the days of his life, to keep in the communion of a Church, in which he cannot injoy all the Ordinances of the Gospel according to the will of Christ is more then I know. But it is one thing to Satisfy our own consciences, as to the purity of acts of Worship, and communion, another thing wholly to reject, cast off, and condemn such Churches in which we cannot see such a purity. It is apparent, that in and after our Saviours time, the Church of the Jews had wofull mixtures, and were corrupted both in *Doctrine* and in *Worship* and *in discipline*, indeed little in it was right. The whole Ceremonial Worship was abolished by the death of Christ. He pulled down that *partition wall* betwixt the Gentiles and the Jews, and abolished the law contained in Ordinances; yet observe the Apostles practice, tho they kept their private meetings of the Christians, yet they also went into the Temple and into the Synagogues; and Acts 19 v. 8. *When Paul came to Ephesus, he went into the Jewish Synagogues and spake there for 3 Months, disputing and perswading, the things belonging to the Kingdom of God. But when diverse were hardned, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, then indeed he departed from them, and separated the Disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus.* If the foundation Doctrines of the Gospel be any where denied or blasphemed, the ways of God reproached in any Church,

and those that walk in them, reviled, and persecuted, or *Idolatry* admitted, set up and encouraged; in all these cases, we may presume Christ hath forsaken a Church, & we may go after him. In other cases we ought only so far to look upon her, because she is black, as not to colly and defile our selves by any communion with her, in what things in her are irregular, and out of order, being so far Separate as *not to touch the unclean thing.*

5. Fifthly. *We should not look upon the Spouses blackness so as to be moved thereby either to think or speak ill of Religion, or the good ways of God, or to depart our selves from them.* I know of no *Religion* whose principles teach debauchery. Much less doth that which is pure, and undefiled before God. We must therefore carefully distinguish betwixt the Vices, and faileurs of Persons, and the faults of principles and the way of Religion. So as it is a most unrighteous thing for any Person to entertain ill thoughts of Religion or to speak Evil of it for the errors failings, or miscarriages of those who profess it. Yet how ordinary a thing is this in the world! how common is the unreasonable clamour of such as hate God -- *Crimine ab uno, Disce omnes*; They are all alike. You see what their religion teacheth them. Indeed upon the account of this, it is that the sins of Professors are so heinous. When God by the Prophet had let *David* know he had pardoned his *sins*, yet he threatens him with a severe punishment because he had given occasion to the *Enemies of God to blaspheme*, Saint *Paul* writes to the *Thessalonians*, 1. *Thess.* 3. 3. *That none should be moved by his afflictions*, for God had appointed him, his Church, his People thereunto. I would speak to you for one thing more. That none should be Scandalized and offended at the wayes of God for the breakings out of *corruptions*, in particular Persons owning and professing *Religion*, for there never were any so white but they had some black Spots.

6. Lastly. *We ought least of all to look upon the Spouses blackness, so as to be colled by it to copy it out for our practice, or plead it in justification of our selves.* The use we should make of the failings and sins of professors should be, that while *we stand*, we should take heed lest we fall. The failings of Christians ought to be for our caution, not for our imitation. And to this end Christians should not only consider *David's sins*, but *Davids* punishment also, his broken bones, his watering his couch with tears, the sword never departing from his house, the difficulty he expres-

seth

seth in his penitential *Psalms* to recover the sense of Gods Love, his hard work of repentance and they will see little incouragement to sin after *Davids* copy. Nor yet after *Peters* if they consider how bitterly he wept after his fall, before he recovered the kind look of his Master. This is enough to have spoken *Doctrinally*, as to this point indeed the whole discourse hath been practicall I may therefore be very short in the application.

In the first place I desire from this discourse that we may all observe both the *Excellency of the Divine* rule, and the *crookednes of the heart of man*. How much sin is committed in the World? How many *indecencies* may be observed in the conversations of men, of Christians, from their *undue looking* upon the Spouse of Christ because she is black? What a comely society would the society of Christians be, would they *bear one anothers burdens*, and every one have a *fellow feeling* of each others miseries, and afflictions? And would *look no further* on the *blackness* of Professors, then to inform, and direct them how to apply themselves to God on their behalf, or to them, or any others any way in order to their help and cure: if Christians would not look upon the Church or each other in afflictions or under any lapses, with a censorious Eye to condemn one another, but with a charitable Eye hoping the best and helping towards it. Not with a *glad* and *rejoycing Eye*, but with a mourning and weeping Eye, being grieved for the afflictions each of other and much more grieved, for the breaking out of one anothers lusts and corruptions. Not with a *Scornfull Eye*, but with an humble Eye, pitying one another under the hand of God upon them, or bewailing the frailty and infirmity of humane nature Not shunning and avoiding one anothers *Societie*, but keeping to the Divine Rule, so far keeping company with the worst of our brethren, as our company may serve them for any good, to their souls, I say were it possible to reduce the whole society of Christians to this order, how beautifull a society would it be? This is our rule, if any walk not up to it, let not religion suffer for their passions and uncharitable behaviour. Use. 1.

But ah! how many fall under a *severe reproof*, if what you have heard in this discourse be true, and the duty of all such as profess themselves to be the disciples of Christ. How many *censorious Christians* and rash judgers have we, that will not consider that the finest gold must have some grains of allowance how many that will undertake to determine the state of Souls from

external

ternal providences that happen to them, and from particular acts and miscarriages. How glad are a great many in the world when they can but hear a report of the failings of Persons owning Religion? That say *report*, and *we will report it and watch for their haltings, saying peradventure he will be enticed.* How many that sit in the seat of the scornful; despising one another for their afflictions, because themselves are at ease. How many of Gods People may repeat those words of the *Psalmist, Psal.* 123. 4. *Our Soul is exceedingly filled with the scornings of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.* How little tenderness is to be found amongst Christians, towards lapsed brethren, how little care to restore such as are overtaken with faults in the Spirit of meekness? Is this not to look upon the Spouse because she is black. How ready are Christians to shake off all *fellowship* and *communion* with *Churches* and *particular Christians* for some partial blackness? And how ready are others for the failings of professors to reproach even Religion it self, and to take up prejudices against the right ways of God? How ready are others to copy out the sinfull miscarriages of Christians, and to justify themselves from them. Certainly these things ought not to be. Oh that all you who are *Daughters of Hierusalem*, who profess to Religion, as you do not *come behind* in many other things that are good, so that you would not come *behind in this*: The many errors of Christians in this one piece of duty, the due and right behaviour of themselves towards Churches, and particular Souls. Let us know that it is a great piece of *Christians perfection*, that whereunto the most have not as yet attained; remember, it is a great piece of your duty to be pressing after it. I shall but mind you of three things which if they will not prevail with you I know not what to add.

1. The *concern in it of the glory of God.* In the obedience of his will, for it is what he hath (as I have shewed you) commanded, the *winning of Souls*: Which may be more estranged, and alienated from God, by an undue behaviour, and much reduced by a just and Christian behaviour, and the upholding the credit, and reputation of religion, and godliness.

2. Secondly. The *concern of your brothers good* is not little; by this thou shalt shew that *brotherly Love* which is so commended in the Gospel; how canst thou say thou lovest thy *Brother*, whiles thou watchest for his halting, and art glad, and rejoicest

when

when thou seest him fallen, that scornest and despisest him because he is low, and mean, and afflicted, or because thou observest his foot to have slipped. Where is thy pity? Where is thy compassion in the case.

3. Finally, *thy own concern is not small in the case.* Upon this argument the Apostle to the *Hebrews perswadeth a remembring of such as are in bonds, and adversity. Heb.* 13. 3 considering that *we also are in the body.* And upon this argument he also perswadeth *tenderness* to persons *black* through *faults, Gal.*6.2. *considering thy self lest thou also be tempted.* What man is there that may not be *afflicted* and *tossed with tempests* as much as any others are? What man is there that may not be overpowered at some time or other by his corruptions, or Satans *temptations?* Now observe that of our Saviour, *Luke* 6. 37, 38. *Judge not,* and *you shall not be judged, condemn not* and *you shall not be condemned* — *For with the same measure that you meet withal, it shall be measured to you again.* In these cases the Law of Nature holdeth, which Christ hath also Canonized in his Gospel. *Whatsoever you would that others should do to you, do you the same to them.*

Sermon XXXVII.

Canticles 1. 6.

— *Because the Sun hath looked upon me.*

I am come now to the sixth Proposition I observed from these words, which the Spouse giveth as one reason of her *blackness.* By the *Sun* I told you, *I understood* the scorchings of *Afflictions,* and *Persecutions*; hence observed,

That in this life the Spouse of Christ (whether we by it understand the true Church, or the particular believing Soul) *is exposed to afflictions, and persecutions which, make her black.* Prop.

The Proposition asserts *the Lot of the People of God in this world,*

world, that is to be *afflicted*, and *persecuted*, to have the Sun look upon them; this sense I put upon this metaphor, having our Saviour my guide, *Mat.* 13. 6. 21. 2. It sheweth the ill effect, or influence which these *Persecutions* have upon the People of God, sometimes, that is, to make her *black*, or at least to *appear so to humane Eyes*. In the handling of this *Proposition* I shall,

1. Shew you, *That Afflictions, and Persecutions are usually the lot of the Spouse of Christ while she is in this world.*

2. *Whence it is, that this is its hard fate to have the Sun to look upon her.*

3. *What collying, or blackning qualities there are in afflictions, which affect the Spouse.*

4. *Whence it is, that because of these Afflictions, and Persecutions, the Spouse of Christ is judged sometimes black, when indeed she is not so.* Then I shall apply the whole discourse.

Concerning *Afflictions* in general, I shall speak little, they are the common lot of mankind, nor is the Child of God more exempted from them then another. I shall therefore rather bend my discourse to such kind of afflictions as are the more peculiar afflictions of the Gospel, and affect the Spouse of Christ, and these are those which we call *Persecutions*; of these our Saviour interpreteth, the *Sun being up*, *Mat.* 13. 6. *v.* 21. These are such injuries as are done to the Church and People of God, for the *Words sake*, for *Righteousness sake*, for *Christs sake*, which are the several phrases by which these kinds of affliction are expressed, *Mat.* 13. 21. *Mat.* 5. *v.* 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 14. Any sufferings undergone of choice, rather then we will defile our conscience with sin. It is true, the *Etymology* of the word will not give us this sense of it, but *verba valent secundum usum*. It is the usage of words, that must give us the sense of them, and this you will find is the sense of this term, both in Holy Writ, and all *Ecclesiastical usage*. Nor doth it alter the case, if men be made sufferers truly upon this account, whether they suffer according to an *humane law*, or not, for if an *humane law* would have purged such acts from unrighteousness, and cleansed them from the guilt of Persecution; the Jews had been clear'd, who said upon their Crucifying of Christ, *we have a law, and by that law he ought to die*; and all the *Martyrs* who have suffered since his time for his names sake (excepting such as had died in *Massacres, and by Assassinations* had died as fools died, for they generally

rally died in the execution of *some laws*, first made by such as thirsted after their blood. Nor is it to be limited only to *capital punishments*. Amongst the noble Army of Martyrs reckoned up, *Heb.* 11. 36. Some had tryal of *cruel mockings — of bonds, and imprisonments — some wandred about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, — in deserts, and Mountains, and in Dens, and Caves of the Earth*, and *Paul* calls *Ishmaels* mocking of *Isaac* a *Persecution*, Gal. 4. 29. *and as then* (saith the Apostle) *he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* Now that this hath been the lot of the People of God in all ages, is so evident both from the whole story of Scripture, and all *Ecclesiastical History*, that I need not be large in the proof of it. He that casteth his Eye upon *Adams Family* (when that contained all the Church God had in the world) will find there a *Cain* rising up against *Abel*, and slaying him, because he offered up a more excellent Sacrifice. In *Abrahams* Family he that *was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit*. *Esau* persecuteth *Jacob*, the *Egyptians* oppress the *Israelites*, there was a continual feud betwixt *Judah*, where the true Church was, and *Israel* after they had Apostatized. *David* in many *Psalms* tells you how he was continually opposed, and maligned. What the holy Prophets of the Lord suffered for declaring the truth, you may read at large in the books of the *Kings* and *Chronicles*, what *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Amos*, the three Children suffered, you may read at large in the Prophets. If you come to the New Testament, you find *John Baptist* beheaded, Christ *Crucified*, *Stephen* stoned, *James killed with the Sword*, *Paul* variously suffering, and all for righteousness sake.

2. It may be more worth our inquiry, whence these storms arose, which our Saviour foretold, and were begun with him, but grew greater presently after his death, and troubled the Church for 300 years together; the root of them was doubtless the *worlds hatred*, this our Saviour hath learned us, and in some measure armed his people against it, *John* 15. 8. *If the world hate you, you know it hated me, before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* God hath put an enmity betwixt *the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent*, Christ and his Seed, the Devil and his Children, but in regard we must not so understand that Text,

Gen. 3. 15. as if God infused those evil habits of *malice*, and *envy*, and hatred of *God*, and *goodness*, but only that God would infuse such Spiritual, gracious habits into the Souls of his People, as through that native malice, envy, and corruption, which is in the hearts of such as God pleaseth not to change by his special grace, *would* provoke such an enmity in them; we must inquire into the root and grounds of that hatred, which produceth this enmity and hostility, and that is, 1. Their *natural aversion to all piety and goodness*. And 2. That *Pride* which is in their *hearts*, which suffereth them not to be *patient* of the preference of godly men in the favour of God, nor of being excelled by them before men in such a conversation, as their lusts will not suffer them to lead, much less to be condemned by their *Doctrines*, and reproofs; hence they both hate such as will reprove them, either in the Gate, or from the Pulpit, and because the Ministers of Christ are those to whose Office especially the latter belongeth, hence they have in all times been made the buts and objects of their fury.

But though these afflictions come immediately, and proximately from men, yet they are also the *appointments* of God, the counsels of God executed by his permissive Providence, not restraining the malice, and lusts of wicked mens hearts, but suffering them to exert, and put it forth; the same account must be given of this sort, as of other sorts of Gods afflictive dispensations; 1. *The punishment of his peoples sins.* 2. *The trial, exercise, and manifestations of his peoples graces.*

1. *The punishment of his peoples sins*, and this is for the most part evident in such *Persecutions* as *fall upon whole Churches*, I say for the most part, it is rare that God lets loose Enemies upon a setled Church to disturb its quiet, till it hath *lost its first love*, and admitted sinful mixtures. Thus it fell out to the famous Churches of *Asia*, to whom the *Epistles* were written in the *Revelations*, and it may be the obvious decays of Religion in the *Primitive Churches*, were no small cause of the Persecutions which vexed, and destroyed them for three hundred years together.

2. *The trial, exercise, and manifestation of his peoples graces*, was also another cause; this we are often told in the *Epistles* of the *Apostles*, not did the Church of Christ receive a small augmentation, and increase by the *courage*, and *constancy*, the *faith*, and *patience* of the *Martyrs*.

3. Lastly,

3. Lastly, God also by this means obtaineth *another end*, viz. *Wicked mens filling up the measures of their iniquities*. That upon them might come (as our Saviour speaks) all the righteous blood that hath been shed by their Fore-fathers. But all this is a digression from the principal thing in the Proposition, which is to shew you how these blacken the Spouse of Christ. That *is*, either, 1. *Really by drawing out corruption*: Or, 2. *Apparingly* in the Eyes of the world.

1. *Afflictions* often *really* blacken *the Spouse of Christ, as they draw out that latent Corruption which is in their Hearts.* This is true both *concerning the Church*, and *concerning the particular Soul.* 1. As to the Church, which is by our Saviour compared to a *Field* of *Wheat*, in which are *Tares* as well as *Wheat*, and to a *Net*, which within the swallow of it hath *bad* as well as *good fish*. Now Persecution makes a great discovery of *Hypocrites*, they that received the Seed into *stony ground, having no root in themselves, fall away*, enduring but a while, and when *Tribulation, or Persecution ariseth, for the Word are immediately offended*; the *Dragons Tail, Revel.* 12. 4. *drew down the third part of the Stars of Heaven, and did cast them down to the Earth.* Thus it is seen in all Persecutions, they always discover a great number of Hypocrites, & false Brethren, yea, and often many of Gods People at first shrink, and fall under the greatness of the temptation, so you know it fell out as to *Peter* in the *High Priests Hall*, and so it hath been with many of such as have at last dyed in the testimony of the truths of God. These things make the Church black, when the Sun looketh upon it, though in the issue the melting of the Church proveth the purifying of it, and making it exceeding white, as you know it is with many things purified by fire, though the fire maketh them at last more bright, and pure, yet at first till their drosse be cleansed, they look more black, so it is with the Church of God in the day of its fiery trial. So it is also as to Particular Christians. *Tribulation* in them at last worketh *Patience*, and *Patience Experience*, and *Experience Hope*. Even such an hope as *will not make ashamed*, but this is after some exercise therein. Hence saith the Apostle, Heb. 12. 11. *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, Nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of Righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby*

by. How black did holy Job look, *Chap.* 3. When he *Curſed the day of his birth.* Who afterward being exerciſed with a long affliction came out white. Till by Tribulation the Soul cometh to be humbled, and tamed to the will of God, and to have his will melted into a reſignation to the will of God, till his faith, and patience come to be both tryed, and to have their perfect work. Tribulation, and Perſecution maketh the Spouſe really black, like the Perſon that hath taken Phyſick to purge out ſome ill humours, ſo long as his Phyſick is working, and ſtrugling with the peccant humours, he is ſicker, and appeareth worſe then before he took it.

2. But ſecondly, Tho *Perſecution and Tribulation may at firſt make the Spouſe really black*; yet they make her appear much more black then ſhe is in the Eyes of the world, and the generality of men and women in it, of which a various account may be given, I will inſtance but in two or three things.

1. The firſt is *the impreſſions which the calumnies, and ſlanders of Enemies thrown upon the Church, and upon believers, have upon many people.* There is nothing more ordinary, then when the Enemies of God are in their higheſt rage againſt his People, to have their mouths fulleſt of obloquy and ſlander againſt them. Thus *David* complains, *Pſal.* 35. 11. that in the day of his calamity, *Falſe witneſſes did riſe up againſt him, and laid to his charge things that he knew not.* The men of the world, whoſe malice, and hatred, prompteth them to injurious actions againſt innocent perſons, conceive themſelves obliged to defend themſelves againſt the common reaſon of the world, which teacheth them to cry out againſt ſuch acts of violence, with raiſing lies, and ſlanders concerning ſuch as they ſo oppreſs, and perſecute, he that is any thing acquainted with the *Pſalms of David*, or other parts of Holy Writ, will find that what we ſee in the age we live in, was but the old practice of wicked and profane Perſons, aſhamed to own the true cauſe of their hatred, and malice. It was *Machiavels* maxime, *Fortiter calumniare, aliquid adhærebit*, lay loud enough (though never ſo falſe) upon thy adverſaries, ſomething will ſtick to them, and indeed it is hardly imaginable but it ſhould.

2. A ſecond reaſon of this judgment is, becauſe the moſt of men judge of *blackneſs, and comelineſs by a meer ſenſual Eye.* The life of the Spouſe is an *hidden life*, her beauty is an *hidden beauty.*

17. The world doth not consider the afflictions of Gods People *Spiritually*, as they are the tokens of *Divine Love* (*for whom the Lord loveth, he chastenet h, and scourgeth every Child whom he receiveth*) nor as they purge *away* the Souls drosse, and take away its *Tin*, as they melt it, and try it, and give *faith* a perfect exercise, and patience a perfect work, nor are they able to discern the Souls exercises of *faith* and *patience*, of *humility*, and *meekness*, *and quiet submission to the will of God*. The afflicted Spouse may not only be exceeding beautiful in the Eyes of Christ, but in the Eyes of the Saints and People of God in their affliction, and tribulation, and the generality of men yet see no beauty and comelines in them, because their beauty is spiritually discerned; all that is external, is *blackness*, and *unlovelinesse*, they are only *glorious within*.

3. *The generality of men and women in the world judge of the love and hatred of God, by what is before men in this life.* The beauty of the Spouse of Christ lieth in two things. 1. *In her acceptation with God.* 2. *In her habits of grace, and the exercise of them*; both these are hidden from the Eyes of the world, they see not the internal frame of a believers Soul (as I but now told you) and as their habits of grace are hidden things (*the world knoweth us not*, saith *John*) so their state of favour, and acceptation with God is an hidden thing also; they cannot understand how God should love him or her, against whom he suffers men to prevail to such a degree, so that the wicked devours the men that are more righteous then they; they judge of Gods love, and hatred to Souls, by what in this life happens to them. The Apostles phrases, 2 *Cor.* 4. 8, 9. are all riddles to them; *we are troubled*, *saith he*, *on every side*, but not distressed, we are perplexed, *but not in despair*, *persecuted*, *but not forsaken*, *cast down*, *but not destroyed*; I have done with the Doctrinal part of my discourse.

Use 1. Is this the *lot of the Spouse of Christ*, to be Sun-burnt with afflictions, and persecutions? Is it their lot to be afflicted, and will afflictions make them *black*, and *appear more black* then possibly they are, what then is our duty?

1. In the first place, *it is certainly our duty to expect afflictions of this nature, and to expect such usage under them, as the people of God before us have constantly met with.* Our Saviour Christ having given to his hearers the law of his Discipleship, *Lu.* 14. v. 27. *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be*

my

my Disciple; addeth further. *v.* 28. 29, 30, 31. *For which of you intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it, lest happily after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all begin to mock him, saying this man began to build, and was not able to finish? Or what King going to make war against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him, that cometh against him with twenty thousand. Or else while the other is yet afar off, he sendeth an Embassage, and desireth conditions of peace?* Our Saviour Christ by those two similitudes, teacheth us all the duty of a pre-consideration, a thinking before hand what may afterwards happen to us in the profession of religion, and the owning of him, and the profession of the Gospel. It is certainly a true saying, *Mala inopinata graviora*, the less prospect we have of evils, the more inexpected they come upon us, the more heavy they prove to us; unthought of evils are alwaies most intolerable, because we are least prepared for them. Let every good Christian therefore live in view of those *Afflictions* which the Apostle calleth the *Afflictions of the Gospel*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 8. Either because they constantly, or most ordinarily follow the profession of it, or because indeed it is unreasonable to think that any person should either adhere to the propositions of truth contained in it, or live up to the rule of life, which the Gospel prescribeth, and be free from them. If (saith our Saviour, *John* 15. 18.) *The world hateth you, you know it hated me before it hated you*, and v. 20. *Remember the word that I said unto you, the Servant is not greater then the Lord, if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. These things* (saith our Saviour, *John* 16. 1. 2, 3.) *I have spoken unto you that you should not be offended, they shall put you out of the Synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God good service.* It is a most unreasonable thing for men to meet with more pleasing things, and prosperity, in the profession of Religion, then the Author of that Religion, or any of his Disciples ever met with, or then he hath told us we should meet with in the profession of it, who knew all things; or that we should expect more tranquillity in the profession of *Religion*, then the nature of that profession, considered together with the *ignorance, and corruption of the world*, doth promise the professors of it. It is true there is nothing in the nature and profession of the

the Christian Religion, considered singly, and apart by itself, that is unlovely, or disobliging to any; it is a Religion full of *good will toward men*. But considering this *Religion*, together with the *corruption of the world*, there is much in it, which he that looketh but with a rational Eye, will see that the world is never like to bear better then it hath hitherto done; it tieth a man up to *believe Propositions according to the revelations of the Word. To live a life according to the rule of the word. To worship God according to the prescriptions of the Word, in all things, it calleth a man to the Law, and to the Testimony*. It obligeth every man in his place to bear a *testimony* against whatsoever is contrary to the strict rule of the Word. Now whoso considereth either the *ignorance of the world*, which knoweth not the Son of God, nor him that sent him, nor what is the revealed will of God, or the *sensuality of the world*, how mad upon their lusts the most of Men and Women are: Or the *Pride* of the world, which maketh men impatient, either of a *verbal reproof, by doctrine and admonitions, or real reproof*, by a quite contrary conversation, more pleasing to God, & acceptable to, and beautiful in the sight of men: Or the *affectation of dominion over the conscience*, which a multitude are possest of, and their impatience at good Christians not owning, and submitting to their dictates, and saying as they say, and doing as they do, can hardly imagine how those that will live godly in Christ Jesus, should live any long time in the world without persecution. Now the *expectation* of those *searchings*, and *Sunburnings*, will have various good effects upon the Soul.

1. *It will put the Soul upon preparing for them*. He that liveth in the expectation of trials, will be oft-times putting the case to himself, if such a tryal should be, what should I do? My Soul wouldst thou stand to, or desert the profession of thy faith? wouldst thou keep close to God, or depart from him? we should be laying up something in store against an evil day.

2. Expected tryals (as I before told you) *are alwaies lighter, and more tolerable*, and endured with more *courage*, and *patience*. We are not so frighted with evils, which we see at distances, and view in the approaches they make to us. Nothing more *weakneth* a Soul in the bearing of an evil, as a sudden surprisal, like an *Apoplexy* to the body, it at once stops those passages by which the Spirits should discover, and exert themselves.

Secondly, This Doctrine calls to Christians for patience, and that both under *Persecution*, and *Afflictions*, and under the *censures*. Br. 2.

sures, and *obloquies of the world*, because of them. Expectation of tryals is a previous duty in order to our preparation for them. *Patience* is a present duty, when the Christian is fallen under them. It is indeed the work of the day; that very grace, which in the hour of tribulation should have its perfect work, it lieth partly in a quiet submission to the good will and pleasure of God, because he hath laid it upon us, an holding our peace, because it is the Lords doing, partly in a *quiet waiting for God* in the fulfilling of his promises made to his People under such circumstances. There are two things that call for our patience under afflictions. 1. The *smart* of the *Affliction*, for no affliction is joyous, but grievous. 2. The *reproach of the world* under it, this often doubleth the affliction, and maketh it more grievous, and intolerable. Now consider how many things have occurred in this discourse, which may excite our patience under both these.

1. *This is the lot of the People of God.* There is none of them but the *Sun* at one time or other works upon. The Apostle exhorteth the *Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 3. 3. *That no man should be moved by their Afflictions, for* (saith he) *your selves know that we are appointed thereunto.* There is a great deal in that saying to quiet the Spirits of Christians under the burthens of tryals. 1. *God hath laid those burthens upon them.* I held my peace (saith *David*) *because it was thy doing. It is the Lord* (said that good man) *let him do whatsoever he pleaseth.* Perhaps (saith *David*) *God hath bidden him curse.* It is a mighty thing to silence the Spirit of a Christian, when he can see the hand of God in it. 2. *It is the Lords appointment.* What hath befallen us in pursuance of an eternal counsel; this speaketh the tryal eventually necessary, it speaketh it also good for his People, for he hath not appointed us unto wrath, nor to any means of that tendency. Nor is it thy lot alone, but the lot of all those who will live godlily in Christ Jesus. The Apostles themselves were appointed thereunto, and wherein are we better, then our Fathers, or our Brethren?

2. You have likewise heard why God hath appointed our lot to be *Trials*, and *Afflictions*, for the *punishment of our sins, and for the tryal, and exercise of our Graces*; this also calls for patience. *Why should a living man complain?* a man for the punishment of his iniquity? We have much less reason to be disturbed at the trial, and exercise of our graces.

3. You

3. You have heard *upon what mistakes it is that the World accounts the Christian black by reason of Afflictions*, because they judge of their complexions by a meer sensual Eye, and from a meer erroneous judgment. We have therefore no reason to be disquieted, because of it. But indeed the main use we should make of this point, should be for *Caution*; and that in two particulars. Use 3.

1. *That afflictions may not blacken us.* 2. *That we do not judge others black, because of them.* 1. Will afflictions blacken the Spouse of Christ? Let us take heed that they have not this ill influence upon us. We have heard that they no otherwise make us black then as they are occasions to draw out our *lusts* and *corruptions*. This is that which we are more especially to watch upon. In afflictive providences, *God tryeth us*, and *Satan and the world also try, and tempt us.* God tryeth our *faith*, our *patience*, our *submission to his will*, whether we will deny our selves, and take up the Cross and follow him. The *Devil*, and the men of the World, which are the Devils instruments, try us, whether we will desert our profession, deny the Lord that bought us, forsake the ways of God, and imbrace a present World. If upon Gods tryal his ends be obtained, then are we by our afflictions *purified*, and made white, if the Devil and his instruments prevail upon us, then are we by our afflictions made black. This is the thing we are to take heed of. *Job* 2. 3. after that God had taken away *Jobs Estate, and Children*, he saith to Satan, *Hast thou considered my Servant* Job, *that there is none like him in all the Earth, a perfect, and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him to destroy him without a cause.* How white there did *Job* appear after his afflictions?

But I shall not inlarge my discourse to afflictions in the general, but limit it to such afflictions as are more peculiar to the Spouse of Christ, and which I have had a more special reference to in my former discourse, *viz. Persecutions*, or sufferings for our *adherence* to the truths of the Gospel, and the good ways of God. Let us take heed that we be not made black by afflictions of this nature, which we shall be, if by them we be *moved* from our good opinion of the ways of God, from our profession, or practice of them; there is no sinner more black then the *Apostate*. See 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. 21. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions*

of the world through the knowledge of the Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it is better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them. Indeed failings in a time of Persecution are caused from a double cause. Sometimes meerly from the *fear of life, or some great danger* that will befall to men, if they adhere to their former profession; failings of this nature make a Soul *look black*, but many such recover themselves, and the Lord who can have compassion upon our infirmities, pities them, and recovers them out of the snare of the Devil; this is a *blackness* we ought to avoid, by putting on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the day of the Lords Battel. But there is another *defection*, which is occasioned by *Persecutions*, and *Afflictions* of this nature: That is, when men out of a greater love to other ways in a time of tryal, renounce the truths of God they have formerly owned, and forsake the ways of God, in which they have formerly walked; to these now Persecutions, and Afflictions of this nature, are but a slight occasion of their *defection* and *Apostacy*, and this eminent difference you will find betwixt the others, and these: The others, though they may be prevailed withal to warp, and start aside, because of the greatness of the temptation (it was *Peters case* in the High Priests Hall) yet will never be prevailed with to speak evil of, and to revile the truths of God which they have owned, nor the ways of God, in which they have formerly walked, and others yet walk. The others being prevailed upon to their Apostacy meerly from the lusts of their hearts, and the greater love they have alwaies had, (tho like Hypocrites they have concealed it) to looser principles, and a looser way of living, take themselves concerned to reproach their former ways, and those who yet walk in them. This is a dreadful blackness, not a tincture upon the face only, but a tincture of the heart, which by occasion of Persecution for the Gospel, breaketh out into the more exterior conversation. To enforce this caution, I shall only mention three things.

1. That this is the *affection only of the stony ground, Mat.* 13. 6, 21. It is a certain sign, that those never received the Seed of the Word *into honest, and good hearts*, that they never had *any*

root

root in themselves who when tribulation, and persecution ariseth, because of the word, by and by they are offended. He that receiveth the truth, in the Love of it cannot so easily abandon the *profession of it*, 1 *John.* 2. 19. *They went out from us, they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* The day of *Persecution* and *tribulation* for the *Gospel sake* is the day of the manifestation and discovery of hypocrites. I do not think that all shrinking in a time of persecution is a note of hypocrisy, there is a shrinking through *fear* in the time of *great temptation* (so *Peter* shrank.) But for men to make a defection, out of a principle of *lust* and greater Love to other ways, and to reproach and speak Evil of the ways of God (which by the way is a certain indication of such a defection) this speaketh the man or woman to be no better then an *hypocrite* nor ever to have been other, tho, to serve his lusts, he disguised himself with a mask of holiness, and Religion.

2. Secondly consider, *That no sinner* so *reproacheth the good and holy ways of God as such a sinner doth.* He tells the World that he hath tryed them, that there is nothing in them, that nothing but the ignorance & prejudices of his education & youth led him into them, that the ways of sin & profaneness, of Formality, and Superstition are better, and therefore he is at last grown wiser then to take such pains to go to heaven. If I would pick out a wretch out of the whole herd of sinners to reproach God, to blaspheme the Gospel and the ways of holiness, I would pick out one that had been formerly a *professor*, and had turned away from his profession this wretch pretendeth from experience to justify what others do but loosely discourse.

3. Thirdly *no sinners must expect a more dreadful Vengeance.* The reason is evident, because none sin against more light. There is no man who hath made a profession, and lived in any practice of Religion, but knows that there is no iniquity in it, nothing but what suteth the common reason of mankind not debauched through lust, and that those who in any measure live up to the profession of the Gospel, are (if sober heathens were to be judges) the best of men, with respect to all duty which the light of Nature teacheth toward the Divine Being, and all good offices towards men. I say there is none who hath made any profession but knows this, and in all his Evil speaking of

them doth not ſin like an heathen, nor like a profane man who ſpeaketh ill of the things he knoweth not, but ſpeaketh contrary to the dictate of his own conſcience. I would not have this underſtood of thoſe who are made *black*, through theſe afflictions, from the temporary prevailing of a ſtrong temptation, theſe with *Peter* (tho they fall) yet go out and *weep bitterly* and are recovered, and made ſtronger by their fall, but of thoſe others before mentioned to whom *Affliction* and *Perſecution* are but the externall occaſions to draw out the luſts of their hearts which waited but for an opportunity to diſcover its ſelf.

2. Finally to ſhut up this diſcourſe let this caution us from Judging the *Spouſe of Chriſt black* becauſe *the Sun hath looked upon her*. You have heard that this is but the Worlds judgment, not according to any meaſures of truth, or righteouſneſs. To this End,

1. *Root your ſelves in this truth, That none can judge of Gods Love or hatred from what happeneth to him in this life.* It is *Solomons* Maxime, and a great truth, God governeth the World according to the juſt *Oeconomy* of his *Providence* with reſpects unto his own wiſe Ends; and no ſpiritual judgment can be made of the ſtate of any, from thoſe adminiſtrations, oft-times he maketh Princes to go on foot, when ſervants ride on horſe back, and the wicked to devour thoſe that are more righteous then they.

2. *Look under the vail of Religious Perſons in the day of their afflictions.* The Vail may be black, and yet the face White. You may poſſibly ſee the People of God glorifying him in the Fires, eminent faith adherence to God conſtancy, patience ſhining forth in the People of God in the hour of their tryals. you may poſſibly hear *Paul* and *Silas*, ſinging praiſes unto God at midnight, and the *Apoſtles* going away from their place of puniſhment rejoicing that the Lord hath thought them worthy to ſuffer for the name of Jeſus Chriſt; and here a *Job* reſolving that, *Tho the Lord ſlayeth him, yet he will truſt in him*. Theſe things ſpeak a Lilly tho amongſt thorns.

Ser-

Sermon XXXVIII.

Cant. 1. 6.

... My mothers Children were angry with me.

I am now come to the 2d cause, which the Spouse of Christ here assigneth of her appearing *blackness*. The *Anger of her Mothers Children. My Mothers Children* (saith she) *were angry with me.* נחרו בי which the *Septuagint* translateth ἐμαχοντο με They *fought in me*, or *they fought against me*. In my explication of the verse I told you that some by *Mothers Children* understand *those lusts* and *corruptions*, which are *members* of that body of death, which yet remain in the best of *Gods People*; those *members* mentioned by the Apostle *Col.* 3. 5. which we have while we live upon the Earth for our exercise to *mortify*, these lye in the womb of the same Soul, together with our habits of grace; these are those which the Apostle calls *the flesh*, which *lusteth against the Spirit*. These cause that war *in our members* mentioned, *James* 4. 1. they *war against the Soul.* 1. *Pet.* 2. 11. Others 2. understand by the *Mothers Children* mentioned in the text, *False brethren*, such members of the Church as are indeed the Children of the *Church*, our *visible Mother*, but not the Children of our heavenly Father. Tho in my own judgment I rather incline to the latter as the sense of the Text, yet I shall give that deference to those worthy Interpreters that have mentioned the former, that (there being a truth in that) I shall take both senses into the *Proposition* which I shall law down thus.

Prop. *The conflict which particular believers have with their own inbred lusts and corruptions, and which the Church hath with false brethren, will often make them appear black to the Eye of the World.*

Here are two propositions wrapped up together.

1. That

1. *That true Christians will have conflicts with their own lusts and corruptions, and the true members of the Church with such as are false brethren.*

2. *That both the particular Christians, and the Church of Christ in these conflicts will appear black.*

1. *True Christians will have conflicts with their lusts, and corruptions.* This is so great a truth that this Spiritual conflict is a note of the truth of grace in the Soul. It is indeed as wars use to be, sometimes hotter, sometimes cooler and more remiss, and the Soul is in it sometimes more, sometimes less a conquerour, as God will please to afford the Soul more or less of his strength, but it is always something. When God did bring the *Israelites* into *Canaan*, he was not pleased at once to drive them out, but *by little and little, Exod.* 23. 28, 29. neither were they faultless, for many of the Tribes did not drive them out; *Judah* could not drive them out, *Judg.* 1. 19. It is said of several of the other Tribes *that they did not drive them out.* Upon which God resolveth that *he would not drive them out*; but they should be as thorns in their sides. God in bringing Souls out of a *state of nature*, into a *state of grace*, doth not wholly drive out *lust and corruption*, he bringeth sin out of its *Dominion*, *Rom.* 6. 13. So as it reigneth not in the mortal Bodies of the Saints; sin like the tree in *Nebuchadnezzars* vision, *Dan.* 4. 14. is *hewed down*, many of its branches are cut off, and its leaves, and its fruit is scattered, and the Soul is got from under it, but yet the *stump of its roots are in the Earth*, tho bound with a *band of Iron and Brass*, kept under by the *law of the* Christians mind, that he getteth no dominion, the Soul is not under the power of it. Now as there was a continual war betwixt the *Canaanites* left in the land, and the *Israelites*, so there is a continual war and spiritual combate, betwixt those πάθη ἁμαρτίας, these passions of sin, these *lustings of the flesh*, and the *Spiritual part* of the Spiritual man. *Paul* doth excellently describe this conflict, *Rom.* 7. 21. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, for I delight in the law of God, as to my inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?* &c. Saint *Paul* sets forth himself there as a man in a battel, and sometimes taken Prisoner. So again, Gal. 5. 17. *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit,*

and

and *the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other.* And indeed in the last words lyes the reason of this war, and conflict. It is of the nature of contraries to expell one another, not to indure one another in the same subject, but to be in a continual combate till the one, or the other hath got the Victory. *Grace in* Scripture is compared to *light*, sin to darkness, light and darkness mutually expell one another, so doth *Grace* and *lust*. Now both these being in the Soul of the regenerate man, who is but Sanctified in part, and neither of them being *lazy* and *inactive*, but active, and operative principles, there must be this conflict which I have mentioned, this war in our members, which makes the People of God look black.

2. And as it fares with individual Christians, with respect to their lusts, and corruptions: so it also fareth with the *Collective Spouse*, the Church of Christ, with respect to false Brethren, who are the presumptive, but not the true members of it. 1. *such will be in the Church while it is upon the Earth.* 2. And *these will be angry with the true members of it.*

1. while the Church is upon the Earth, it will be like a *field of Wheat* which hath *tares* in it; the Gospel and the preaching of it is like a *drag-net* which draweth unto the Church, as its shore *Fish*, both *good* and *bad*, there will come a time, when the Lord will take his fan, and throughly purge his floor, but that will be in the day of judgment; if we look upon Gods ancient Church, the Congregation of *Israel*, there was a *Jannes*, and a *Jambres*, that *resisted Moses*, a *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* that rose up against *Moses* & *Aaron*, many false Prophets to mislead People & many more false hearts, that were easily misled; the *Chaldee Paraphrast* expounds the term in the Text of false Prophets; *Ahab* and *Jezebel* had 300 of them at a time, a great number of the People, were ready upon all occasions to relapse into Idolatry, and Superstition, as they had any Princes, that would either tolerate or incourage it; *Jeremiah* and *Micaiah*, and *Amos* and *Elijah*, and all the true Prophets of the Lord found that their Mothers Children, were angry with them, so did those that were good People amongst them, the *Priests* were a *snare upon Mizpeh*, and a *net spread upon Tabor*, to hinder the People from attending the true Worship of God. Look upon the Church of Christ: In Christs little company there was a *Judas*, a Son of perdition, and amongst the multitudes that followed him, there

were

were many that followed him but for the season. In the primitive times, there was a *Demas*, an *Hymenæus* and a *Philetus* a *Simon Magus*. Many false Apostles that opposed *Paul*, and the Apostle to *Timothy* Prophesieth that there shall not be a lesser plenty of them in the latter days.

1. Nor can it be reasonably expected otherwise considering 1. *Gods appointment*, for the exercise of such as be real and true Saints. 1. *Cor.* 11. 19. *There must be* (saith the Apostle) *heresies amongst you*, that *those who are approved may be made manifest*. False brethren discover themselves, either by the broaching of *false doctrine*, to corrupt the *faith of Christians*. Or *by bringing in undue Rites, Ceremonies and Superstitions*, to corrupt the Worship of God. Or by a *looseness of conversation*, discovering the want of the Love, and fear of God in their hearts. Now the Lord hath appointed such a Constitution of his Church, that these shall be tolerated in it, that those who are approved may be made manifest; contraries near one another best discover themselves.

2. Secondly, Men are ryed up to a judgment *according to outward appearance*. God alone judgeth the heart and according to the reality of things. Even Christ himself tho as God he was *Omniscient* and needed not that any should tell him what is in the heart of man, yet when he appeared in the head of his Church here upon the Earth, and acted as the chief Minister in and of it, he admitted a *Judas* into his first society of that nature, teaching us in our admissions of members, whether by Baptism or other wise, to content our selves with a visibility, and outward appearance; there must be a difference betwixt the Church *visible*, and *invisible*, the Church *Militant* and *Triumphant*.

2. But as these are contrary in their *Principles*, and in their *Ends*; so they must and will be contrary in their actions, and they will be angry with the true, and more sincere Professors of the Gospel. Thus it hath been in all ages and periods of the Church, thus it is and will be. *Cain* was a false Brother in the Church in *Adams* Family, he rose up against his brother *Abel* and slew him, because he offered up a better Sacrifice, and God had more respect unto him then he had unto *Cain*. *Ismael* was a false Brother in *Abrahams Family*, *Esau*, in *Isaac*, the Scripture tells you of the ill agreement betwixt *Isaacs* and *Ismaels*, *Jacob* and *Esau*. The whole story of the Church of the Jews recorded

corded in Scripture, and of the Church of Christ recorded in the *New Testament*, is a proof of this opposition, so is the whole story of the Church since the Apostles time, and what need we any further proof then what we have at this day? nor can any thing else be rationally expected, whether we consider the falseness of such Persons hearts to God, and the interest of God, or the Pride of their hearts, Or the looseness of such mens principles.

1. *The hearts of all such are false to God, and the interest of God.* The love of God is the thing which doth distinguish a sincere Christian from an Hypocrite; the Hypocrite loveth God in *Word, and in Tongue only*, the other loves him *in Deed, and in Truth*. There is no faithfulness in an Hypocrites heart, his heart is not right with God; the true Christian is sincere for God, and serious, and right down in his actings, for the honour and glory of God. The other doth but mock and dissemble, and pursueth private interests of his own, he sees that profession serveth his design and interest. Observe in any other thing, where two, or more are joined in the prosecution of a design, and one of them is serious, & right down, and plainly pursueth his end, but the other runs along with the business for some other ends, or upon some other designs, but is not real in his scope, intention, and actions for the obtaining the end which he pretendeth to; he whose heart is right for the work, hath no greater enemy then he who is joined with him seemingly in the pursuit of it. This is the case here, all those who are visible Members of the Church of God, are appearingly coupled in a design for the honour and glory of God. It is the whole business of the Church of God, which is the only body of People upon the Earth, which God hath called, and chosen for that purpose, for the predication of his name. In this Church there are some who do it from a single and right heart, truly intending the honour and glory of God as their end; there are others, who are under an ingagement to do it as much as the other, but their hearts are not right with God, do not stand towards that work, but drive some self end of private honour, credit and applause, these men may do some things right, but they never walk with God fully, as I remember it was said of *Amaziah*, one of the kings of *Judah*, 2 Chron. 25. 2. *He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart*, so I may be said of these, it may be they may do many things, which as to the matter of them are right in the sight of the Lord, but they never do them with a perfect heart, so as there can never be a good harmony betwixt them and such whose hearts are more sincere and perfect. The Hypocrite will never be heartily pleased with the sincere Christian.

2. Especially considering the *Pride* that is in the heart of every Hypocrite. *Though the Hypocrite doth not himself love to do much for God in the denial of himself*; nor will further serve the Lord, then he can by the service of God serve himself, yet *he is too proud to be patient of being outdone by any*; this was the ground of that opposition which *Cain* gave his Brother *Abel*, this made him so wroth, and his countenance to fall, *because the Lord had respect to* Abel, *and to his offering, but unto* Cain *and his offering, he had no respect*, Gen. 4. 4. 5. Sincere Godly Christians will be doing their utmost for God, spending much of their time, and strength in communion with God, they will be much in praying, much in hearing the Word, strict in their walking, ready to *exhort*, to reprove, and admonish such as walk disorderly, and not as becometh the Gospel. Hypocrites and false Brethren are no more able to bear this, then they are able to obtain of themselves to do like them. Hence are their censures of them, as Persons that are righteous overmuch, needlessly strict, and severe, hence their envy, and reproaches, and their watchings for their haltings, and taking all advantages to blazon their infirmities, and to make them as odious, and to look as black as they can.

3. Another reason of it lyeth in the looseness of their principles, both their principles of *Doctrine* and *Faith*, and their *practical principles*, directing their lives and conversations. False brethren are alwaies looser in one or both these sorts of principles, then the sincere Christian is. The study of the Hypocrite is to *form his faith*, and to *interpret the law of God* into a consistency with his lusts, that he may keep his lusts, and yet protect himself from the checks, and reverberations of his conscience, and flatter himself with hopes of Eternal Salvation, and also keep up his credit, and reputation with the world. The sincere Christian hath no other design then to *form his faith*, according to the revelations of truth in the Word, and his conversation to the rule of life in the Word of God, the Word is *a lamp to his feet, and a lanthorn to his paths*, and from that he dares not start; when the false Prophets told *Micajah*, that the Prophets had all with one mouth prophesied good to *Ahab*, and suited his humour. *Micajah* answers them, *As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord bids me speak, that will I speak*. The same is the language of every true Christian; whatsoever Propositions of truth I find spoken by Holy Men that were inspired by God in his Word, that, and nothing but that shall be an article of my faith. What way soever God hath prescribed me in his Word to Worship him in, and

by,

by, that will I do, neither adding thereunto, nor yet diminishing therefrom, whatsoever rules God hath given me for the order of his Church, to them I will adhere; whatsoever laws God hath given me to guide my conversation, to the observation of them I will keep; thus he is in all things tied up to a divine rule. But now the false Professor hath looser principles. He dare allow the judgment of his own natural reason in determining of truth, as the object of his faith, and of the Traditions, and Practice, and Precepts of men, as the rule of his Worship, and the will of men as to the order, and government of the Church and from one of these three causes, most ordinarily proceeds that opposition which is given to the strict Servants of God from the anger of their Mothers Children. I come to the second Member of the Proposition.

2. *This opposition is one great cause of the Spouses appearing black.* Both the opposition which the particular Christian hath from his own impetuous lusts, and motions to sin, and which that part of the Church, which is alone the Spouse of Christ, hath from false Brethren, and the opposition given her by them, are a great cause of the Churches blackness, or appearing blackness.

The grounds of it are, 1. *Partly that trouble, and sadness which usually attends those conflicts in the Spirits of Christians.* The time of War is a time of sadness in that part of the world which is the seat of it, and the hour of this Spiritual War and Conflict is a sad time in the Soul. *Paul* cryeth out, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?* Hence are Christians sad, and heavy walkings, which the World counteth blackness. 2. Partly from the *prevailings* of sin sometimes in the Soul. *David* complained under the *Old Testament* that *Iniquities prevailed against him*, and *Paul* complaineth under the *New Testament*, not only of a War, but of a Victory in some Skirmishes, that the law of his Members got against the law of his Mind, so that he was brought into a captivity to the law of sin, which was in his Members, *Rom.* 7. 23. Now sin is that, which maketh the Soul really black, and where any of the People of God in the view of the world so discoloureth himself, the world needeth no provocation to call them *black*. The Eye that is directed by a Soul full of malice, envy, and hatred, spies the least miscarriages in the Soul that is hated, and aggravates them with the highest aggravations.

And as this is true concerning that opposition which the particular Soul findeth from its inbred lusts and corruptions, that makes

the believer black, so it is as true, that the opposition which that part of the Church, which is the true Spouse of Christ, meets with from *false Brethren*, will make the Church appear *black*. This will appear from the several unlovely consequences of such opposition.

1. From hence are *Errors*, and *Heresies*, *Schisms*, and *Contentions in the Church of Christ*; of these you read in the Epistles to the *Romans*, *Corinthians*, *Galatians*, then which nothing make a Church appear more *black* in the Eyes of the World, and they are more especially the reproaches of the Church of Christ, by how much the Gospel, which is their rule, in which they are instructed, and to the rules of which they profess a submission, is a Gospel of peace, and Christ Jesus, which is their head, and the Author of the Gospel, is the *Prince of Peace*. Errors rise up in the Church from men of corrupt principles. The Apostle tells us of *perverse disputings by men of corrupt minds*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 5. and 2 *Tim.* 3. 8. you have it again, *men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the Faith*. Hence also are *Schisms* and *Contentions*. Only by Pride saith *Solomon* cometh contention. The cause of *Schisms* is generally *some corruption in Churches*, and deviation from that *Order* which Christ hath set, and established, which that part of the Church, which keeps close to the Word as its rule, cannot bear with. Indeed sometimes they are caused from men's corrupt principles, as to the faith, and love of preheminence, their rashness, and want of Judgment; how far Christians ought to preserve unity, but I say generally they are caused by such as are *false Brethren*, who if they be not those who divide, yet are those who give the cause of the division.

2. From hence are *misrepresentations of the Servants of God, as a Pharisaical generation*, that say unto others, stand far from us, we are holier then you, such as would be too pure, and righteous over much, that make a shew of more then indeed they are, Hypocrites, Precisians, that are over-nice, *&c.* Such kind of charges, and imputations as these, proceed ordinarily from *Mothers Children*, false Professors, and Brethren, such as have a *form of Godliness, and deny the power of it*, such as are Members of the Church, but their hearts are not perfect with God.

3. From hence *Timidity* are the *failures of some sincerer Servants of God*, by yielding too far to the corruptions of others

(too many instances of which we have had.) The opposition which Christians have met with, having been a continual dropping upon them, and overpowered them, to do many things against the dictates of their own consciences, thus losing their beauty, it is no great wonder if they appear black. Indeed from hence almost are all those things which render Christians, and Churches black. Now come to the application.

Use 1. Let not then Christians think it strange if their *habits of grace find opposition from within, and the actings of their grace meet with opposition from without.* There is no Child of God, but findeth upon experience that *his Mothers Children are angry with him*, his flesh is many times lusting against the Spirit, and he findeth a War in his Members. As *Rebekah* was troubled, because she found Twins *struggling* together in her Womb, so is many a good Christian, when as indeed there is no greater *note of Grace*, then this Combate of the Flesh and the Spirit; if thou hadst not two parties within, there would be none of these conflicts, the *unregenerate man* hath nothing of them, he hath motions to sin, but no contrary habits to oppose, no *lustings of the Spirit against the Flesh*, such a man may indeed from natural light, and the obligation, under which the law of nature layeth him, sometimes resist motions to more gross, and flagitious sins, but this combate is rare, and in very rare cases, and those such, where the law of nature is offended, or his honour, and reputation, and profit, and advantage is concerned, as to his avoiding of them; nor is the Battel ever very hot. The true Christian hath a double principle, the one natural, this inclineth, and moveth him to sin: the other *supernatural*, and infused. Both these principles are active, and operative, and these spiritual conflicts must be expected, the discovery of the truth of Grace in thy Soul doth much depend upon thy behaviour in the Spiritual Fight, and thy managery of it; if thou findest this conflict, if thou maintainest it with thy might, if thou criest unto God for help and strength, if ordinarily thou beest a conquerour: Thy opposition is so far from being an evidence against thee, that it is a great evidence for thee.

Nor let good Christians wonder if the *exercise of their grace* meets with opposition from without, and that from their Mothers Children too. As there are two parties in every gracious heart, so there are, and ever were *two Parties* in the Church of God.

God. There were some, and those the greater number, on whose behalf *Paul* saith, he could *wish himself accursed from Christ*, they were *his Brethren*, and not only his *Kinsmen according to the Flesh*, *but* Israelites, *to whom belonged the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the promises*, yet *Rom.* 9. 6. they were not *Israel*, though they *were of Israel*, neither were they all Children, because they were the Seed of *Abraham*, v. 8. *They which are the Children of the flesh, are not the Children of the promise.* God in one place promiseth to make his Seed as the Stars of Heaven, *Gen* 22. 17. in another place, *Gen.* 13. 16. *As the Dust of the Earth.* He had a *Starry Seed*; these were a great number, for he was the Father of the Faithful, the *Father of Believers*, the Father of all Holy Men that do the works of *Abraham*. He had also a *dusty Seed*; this was greater, thus it is said he should be the *Father of many Nations*, and he was the Father of the whole *Jewish Nation*, the only visible Church God had for many years upon the Earth; but these (saith the Apostle) *are not all Children*: 'Tis the same case with the Church under the New Testament, it is made up partly of *presumptive* equivocal Members, partly of *real* univocal Members, such as glory not in appearance only, but in reality, that are not as Jews only outwardly, nor of that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but they are *Jews* inwardly, Christians indeed, and that circumcision which is of the *heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of Men, but of God.* There is a *Baptism in the name of Christ, and a Baptism into Christ, a Baptism with Water, and a Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, and with Fire, all that are Baptized with a Ministerial Baptism with Water, are not Baptized with the Spiritual Baptism of Regeneration. These two parties in the Church never did, never will agree, there is in them a different Seed, they are acted from different principles, and they act to quite different ends: Let not therefore good Christians wonder, and think it strange if they find still that their Mothers Children are angry with them; it is no more then ever was the lot of the true Spouse of Christ, and will be her lot until Christ shall come, and with his Fan throughly purge his floor. Nor do you wonder if these things make you appear black. The *Papists* think they make us appear very black, when they can tell us of *Errors, and Heresies, Factions, Divisions, and Schisms* amongst us, and indeed it is a reproach to us, they are *spots*, and *blemishes* in the Assemblies of *Protestants*; But, 1. Are they then so well agreed amongst

amongst themselves? what mean then the differences betwixt their *Dominicans* and *Franciscans*, to say nothing of their other Orders? What means their *Secular Priests* and Jesuits so bespattering one another in their Books? Though it is very probable that if *Protestants* could dispense with their consciences, to with-hold from the People the sight and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, the rule both of their faith and life, so as they know no more to differ about then their Priests tell them; or to set up a *Judge of all controversies*, that should be infallible, and from whose decrees none must vary? And finally to set up an *Inquisition*, to force all mens *Obedience* to the decrees of that infallible Judge, under pain of death; I say could *Protestants* in these things dispense with their consciences, to take such methods for *unity*, they might probably arrive at as great, if not a greater unity then they can glory in, who have been so far from it, that themselves reckon 30, or 32 *Schisms*, and those of that nature, as according to their principles destroy all unity, for so many times (some of which lasted a great many years too) they have been at a loss for to find the *true visible head of the Church* We know that the *Apostolical* and purest Churches that ever Christ had upon the Earth, had some that were indeed *Mothers Children*, Members of the visible Church, but no Children of our Heavenly Father, and that these have constantly been angry with, and given opposition to those that have been the true, and sincere Members of the Church, and have brought in Errors, and caused Schisms and Heresies. So as we are not to wonder if the things that have been still, are whiles the state of the Church is yet militant, we are not indeed to cause them, or be the Authors or Abettors of them, but neither are we to be discouraged, or condemn Churches for them, who may be comely, though they have something of this *blackness* thus caused.

I shall shut up this discourse with a few words of *Exhortation*. 1. *To all such as own themselves Christians, and glory in the name of the Sons and Daughters of the Church.* That they would answer that *name and relation*, and not be a cause of the *Spouses blackness, or appearing blackness*. There are two ways by which we may be so: 1. *By a loose and scandalous conversation.* 2. *By being angry with our Brethren.* By the first we make the Spouse black. By the second we cause her to be reproached, and called, and counted black.

1. *Take heed of a loose and scandalous conversation.* This makes you *spots* in the Assemblies of Christians, and declares you to be but presumptive Members. Can a man be a Member of Christ, and a Mem-

Member of a Harlot? Christs Companion, and a Pot-companion? A Disciple of Christ, who hath commanded us not to *swear* falsly, idly, or prophanely, and yet being a common Swearer, and Curser, and Blasphemer? *Only let your conversation* (saith the Apostle) *be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* Loose livers are the blots of any Church, the Church is a body of *called ones*, now you are not called to uncleanness, or profaneness, but unto purity, and holiness. It is for your sake that the name of Christ, and the body of Christ is evil spoken of. Consider, that though it be the way of God to denominate his Church *a parte meliori*, from the better part of it, and therefore he calls the Church those that are *called, and sanctified in Christ Jesus*, (though they all be not so that are Members of the visible Church) yet it is the way of the World, out of their hatred both to Christ, and all that have relation to him, to denominate them *a parte deteriori*, from the worser part, and to call all Professors of Religion by the name that belongeth only to the worser part of them. But this is not so proper an application of this Proposition, which speaks of the anger of false Brethren as the cause of the Spouses blackness.

2. Therefore let me speak to you, whose corruptions will not allow you to be so strict in your walking with God as others are, whether in matters of Worship, or your more ordinary conversation, yet not to be *angry* with those who desire to walk more closely with God then you think needful, and in some things dare not give themselves that liberty, which you dare allow your selves. I will offer three things to your consideration, which may help you to abate your wrath.

1. Consider first, *How little reason there is for you to be offended?* You all profess to be going the same journey, aiming at the same end, you all profess to be going towards the new *Hierusalem*. Your dispute is only about the neareſt way, you are satisfied, that this way of worshipping God, this course of Religion will bring you to your journies end, others cannot be so satisfied, but take a *straiter way*, what reason is there here for thy wrath, who thinkeſt a broader will bring thee as well to thy journies end? how doth his walking more strictly prejudice thee? Thou thinkeſt thou doeſt enough in the Service of God, another thinks he can never do too much, never do enough, and therefore he heareth more, and readeth more, and praeth oftner, wherein art thou hereby prejudiced? Haſt thou not rather cauſe to bleſs God for the good example of others, and to examine thy

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own ways, and why another should not take up with those measures in duty, with which another cannot be satisfied? Thou thinkest that in the Worship of God, thou mayest be guided and limited by the precepts, and practices, and traditions of other men: others considering that it is but reasonable, (*Worship* being an Homage which the Soul payeth to God) that God should prescribe his own Homage, and considering that God hath declared himself to be a *jealous God*, and affixed the declaration of this his jealousy to the second Commandment, which concerneth his external Worship, and that in the whole course of Scripture, the revelations of Gods wrath appear more against sins relating to the Worship of God, then any other sins, they dare not in the matters of Divine Worship deviate from the Divine Rule; wherein art thou by this prejudiced? What reason is there for thine anger. Surely they walk most safely, that finding the Holy Scriptures a perfect rule, able to furnish a man to every good work, keep close to that, and dare not in practice admit any thing but what they find there commanded or practised. Thou owneſt the Holy Scriptures as thy rule? Why art thou offended that another keepeth closer to it then thou dost?

2. Consider *you are a great cause of the Spouses appearing black.* She is reproached for the contentious divisions, and Schisms that are in it, who are the cause of them? those that keep to the rule of Gods Word, or those that depart from it? Surely the whiteness, and purity of any Church lieth in its adherence to the Divine Rule, the more a particular Christian, or any society of Christians, keep close to the pattern which Christ and his Apostles have set them, and to the rule which God hath given them, the more pure, the more white and comely they are, Their deviation from it is their blackness, so are those contentions, and divisions which arise in the Church, because of those deviations; it is a dreadful text, 1 Cor. 3. 17. *If any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy.* The Apostle is there speaking with reference to the Bodies of Professors, which he had called the *Temple of God.* But it is as true concerning the Church of God, that is the *Temple of God*, this is *destroyed*, or *defiled*, for the word may be translated by either of these words. God (saith the Apostle) will destroy him; who are they that *defile the Church*, and indeed destroy it, but those that are the cause of scandals in it, either of its being black, or of its appearing black unto the World?

3. Lastly, Let the words of our Saviour sink into your hearts, *Mat.* 18. 7, *Woe unto the World, because of offences, for it must needs be that offences must come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh. Luke* repeating that passage, *ch.* 17. *v.* 1. addeth, *v.* 2. *It were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he cast into the Sea, then that he should offend one of these little ones.* Whoso considereth the *Church* as the only body of People in the World, by whom God is *spontaneously* glorified, and how God hath expressed his favour and love to it, must dread the laying a foundation for those scandals which arise in it, and are thrown upon it, from which it appeareth black.

Lastly, You that are the sincerer part of the Church, and have heard that you must expect that your Mothers Children should be angry with you; that there should be some *bad fish in the drag-net with the good*, some *Tares* in Christs Field of Wheat, some that will be spots in your Assemblies, and that these, if they do not make you black, yet will make you appear black; what remaineth, but that you take care that neither the *lusts* of your own hearts, which are (in a sense) your Mothers Children, make you *black*, nor the opposition that you will meet with from such as are false Brethren, make you appear more black then indeed you are. This care of yours must be shewed, 1. *In a watchfulness against your motions to sin*, especially such sins as are your proper lusts, the sins which do most easily beset you. 2. *In a mortifying of your Members.* 3. *In a care that you be not unwarrantably disturbed, and unduly disquieted*, because of the opposition which you find from the law of your Members. 4. *In a maintaining the Spiritual Combate*, &c. 5. *In an innocent, and inoffensive carriage in your stations, that those who would speak evil of you, as evil doers, may see your good works, and glorify your heavenly Father*, for so (saith the Apostle, 1 *Pet.* 2. 15.) *is the will of God, that with well doing, you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, in avoiding unnecessary divisions and seperations*, we ought to walk with all that own the name of Christ as far as the Shooes of the Gospel will carry us, where we cannot walk with any who call themselves Christians, and walk with Christ, that is, keep to the rule and law, which he hath given us, there we must part, and the offence lieth on their parts who give the cause of it, but otherwise we ought to keep Unity. Finally in a *peaceable* and quiet *departing from them with whom we cannot agree*, I know all this will not avoid the unreasonable anger of some of our *Mothers Children*, but by doing this, we shall remove the stumbling

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ſtone, and rock of offence from our own doors, they will be thoſe by whom *offences come*, and the *woe* pronounced by our Saviour will belong to them.

Sermon XXXIX.

Cant. 1. 6.

...They made me the Keeper of the Vineyards...

THE Spouſe is yet apologizing for her Blackneſs, of which ſhe aſſigneth four Cauſes. 1. *Her afflictions*: *The Sun* (ſaith ſhe) *hath looked upon me.* 2. *Her oppoſition both from within and without*: *My mothers Children were angry with me.* Theſe I have diſcourſed, and come now to the third Cauſe aſſigned by her, expreſſed in theſe words; *They made me the Keeper of the Vineyards*: They, that is, *my Mothers Children* (before mentioned) *made me the Keeper of the Vineyards.* In my Explication of the Text, I hinted a double ſenſe of the words; the one *literal*, the other *metaphorical.* In the former it ſignified her *intanglement in ſecular affairs.* Keeping the Vineyards is a ſecular imployment, a mean imployment, and a laborious imployment. Thence you read that the General of the *Aſſyrian Army*, 2 *King.* 25. 12. left *of the poor of the Land to be the Dreſſers of the Vineyards*; and thoſe in the Parable who had *laboured in the Vineyard*, told their Lord, that they had born the heat of the day. Thus the ſenſe is, *I have been too much intangled in ſecular affairs*; that hath been the cauſe of my blackneſs. 2. Others underſtand the term Vineyard in a *metaphorical ſenſe.* God uſeth the term to ſignifie his Church, *Iſa.* 5. 1, 2, 3. As *God* hath a *Vineyard*, ſo *Idolaters* and *ſuperſtitious perſons* had *their Vineyards.* Moſt Heathen Nations having ſome notions of a God, have had ſome *Worſhip of a Deity*, and wanting the guidance of holy Writ, grew vain in their own imaginations; hence came *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*; the *Iſraelites*, having lived many years in *Egypt*, and in their paſſage through the Wilderneſs, converſing with the *Moabites*, and *Midia-*

nites; and not driving out all the *Canaanites* out of the promised Land, by converse with them, learned to know, and to serve their gods, as you shall read in their whole story, in the Books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*; there being a corrupt as well as a sincerer part, in the Jewish Church, the corrupter part, imposed upon the whole, the Idolatrous and Superstitious Worship, and Rites of these Nations. This is the sense into which the *Chaldee Paraphrast* interpreteth these words. I am not apt to think this the sense, but more incline to the former; yet I shall not wholly pass it over, partly because the *Chaldee Paraphrast* is a very antient Interpreter; and partly because that sense carries a truth in it. Hence arise two Propositions.

Prop. 1. *That a submission to false Worship, and Superstitious Rites in the Service of God, will make the Spouse of Christ appear black.*

Prop. 2. *That great entanglements in secular affairs, will make the Spouse of Christ black.*

I shall speak shortly to the first, and more largely to the second, which I rather think to be the sense. The Church of God hath three things committed to her trust; the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*; the *Ordinances* of *Worship*: The *Rules of Discipline*. The admission of corruption in any of these, maketh a Church black, as it is a breach of trust, and a *deviation from the Divine Rule*. This is *sufficiently* proved by the message Christ sent to the seven Churches of *Asia*. He let the Church of *Ephesus* know, that *he had something against her, because she had left her first love*, *Rev.* 2. 4. *v.* 13. He reflecteth upon the Church of *Pergamus*, because she had those in her, who held the *Doctrine of Balaam*, and of the *Nicolaitans*, *v.* 20. He reflecteth on the Church of *Thyatira*, *for suffering the woman* Jezabel *to seduce the Servants of God, to commit fornication, and to eat things offered to Idols*. Nor is any thing plainer in the whole story of the Jewish Church, than that the admission of corruption in the *Worship and Order of that Church*, was that which made it black and defiled, and look unlovely in the Eyes of God, and was at last the cause of its ruine and destruction. But because Christians may not so distinctly understand either wherein the *Nature of Worship* lies, or wherein the difference lieth betwixt that which is *true*, *and false*, I shall in a few Conclusions lay down what I conceive to be truth in this case, and then pass on to the handling of the *Proposition* arising from the other sense of the words.

1. *Worship is an homage performed to God immediately, in consideration of his Excellency.* This is *Aquinas's*, and other of the School-

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mens notion about *Worſhip*, and it is a very good one.

2. This *homage* is either the *homage* of the *outward*, or *inward man*. The homage of the inward man lieth in the exerciſes of our *Faith*, *Love*, *Fear*, the exerciſe of our thoughts upon God, admiring him, &c. But that which the Scripture calleth *Worſhip* moſt ordinarily, is ſome *external acts* teſtifying that *inward homage*, and *ſubmiſſion of the heart*.

3. *Theſe acts are either ſuch as the Light of Nature directeth, and the Law of Nature obligeth us unto, or ſuch as God hath preſcribed us in his Word. Worſhip* being in the general nature of it, nothing but an external homage done to God, in teſtification of the inward, and more ſecret homage and ſubjection of our Soul. It is the moſt reaſonable thing imaginable, that God *ſhould preſcribe it*; this he hath done as the *God of Nature*, imprinting a Law in our hearts, obliging us to call upon him for good things we want, and to *praiſe him* for good things received, partly *in his holy Writ*. There is no *natural Worſhip*, but is alſo *inſtituted*, but there is much *inſtituted Worſhip*, which the Light of Nature doth not ſhew, nor the Law of Nature oblige us to, ſuch as *Reading the Scriptures*, *hearing the Word Preached*, communicating in the holy Sacraments.

4. *External acts of Worſhip*, that depend meerly upon *Inſtitution*, muſt be either *inſtituted by Chriſt*, or by our own *wills*, or the *wills of others*, *Col.* 2. 23. there is a *Will-worſhip* mentioned.

5. *All true Divine Worſhip muſt have a Divine Inſtitution.* Whatſoever is pretended as an immediate act of homage to the *Divine Being*, and is not directed by *Nature*, and *directed* alſo, and *confirmed* and *regulated* by the Revelation of the Divine Will in the Word of God, is what we call *Falſe Worſhip*, or *Will-Worſhip*. As the firſt Commandment directeth our *homage to God*, as the alone *true Object*, ſo the ſecond directeth the *manner of it*, to be according to his revealed Will; for certainly that Commandment muſt not be interpreted as meerly prohibiting the *Worſhip of God* by, or before a *graven Image*, or the ſimilitude of a thing, on purpoſe ſet before us, either as *repreſentative* of the *Divine Being*, or as a *Medium* by which we worſhip God, but as *prohibiting all other Modes, Acts and Methods* which have no more of a Divine Inſtitution than that hath, only that one inſtance is given, and under it the other included. So that a *graven Image* is but *ſpecies pro genere*, and thoſe that worſhip God before a painted Image, or any other way which God hath not preſcribed, are alſo tranſgreſſors of that ſecond

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Commandment. Hence it is observable, that God directed the *Jews* not only every *Act* by which an homage was paid to him, but also every Rite and Ceremony, and it was guilt enough for the *Jews* in his Worship to do that which *he commanded them not*. *Uzziah* must not offer Incense, nor *Saul* Sacrifice, nor *Nadab* and *Abihu* make use of *ordinary fire*, nor *Uzzah* carry the Ark upon a *Cart*, *nor touch it*. The same we conceive to be the will of God in the New Testament, God being a Spirit, and to be worshipped by us in *Spirit and in Truth*, as well as by the *Jews*; and it seemeth the most reasonable thing imaginable, 1. Considering *that our Worship* in its self is a pitiful thing, infinitely disproportioned to the perfection and excellency of God, so as it *deriveth all its value from the Divine Institution*. 2. And being an homage done to God, it is most reasonable that God himself should direct what he will accept. 3. Nor is it to be imagined, had God left man in the case to his own conduct and direction, how vain and various man would have been. 4. Besides, it is not reasonable to think that the holy Scriptures should be a less perfect Rule in matters of Worship, than it is in matters of Doctrine, or that concern our ordinary course of conversation, or that acts of Worship, as to which it appeareth in all the Scripture, that God had a *special jealousie*, and in which we are said to *draw nigh to God*, should be none of those good works, as to which the holy Scriptures are sufficient to furnish every good man.

6. Divine Worship being an *humane act*, and that of the most noble nature, as it must have such circumstances as are necessary to all humane acts, (such are *Time* and *Place*;) so it is reasonable that it should have such *circumstances* as suit such acts, so as they may be performed in such manner as the *Light of Nature*, and *common guise* and *custom* of Countries shall not determine, sordid, filthy, or *indecent*, and such as may render it useful, and more profitable and advantageous, and answering to their ends, which *circumstances*, being necessary to the acts as humane acts; or at least plainly *expedient*, to avoid the indecent and sordid performance of the acts, or for the more *profit* and *advantage* of the acts, and such as in regard of the variety of Countries, the Customs and Usages of them, *&c.* could not be determined by the Word of God, must be determined by the Governours of Churches, Nations, or Kingdoms, but still with respect to the general ends of the action. But for any things used in the *Worship of God*, neither directed by *Nature*, nor yet by *holy Writ*, and appropriated to the *Worship of God*, as a *Religious act*,

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out of a respect to the excellency of the *Divine Being*, and as an homage to it, I cannot see how they can be lawful, they must have something of the nature of Worship in them, and having so, they ought to have a *Divine Institution*, without which I cannot see how they should avoid the guilt of *Idolatry*, or *Superstition*, which differ thus. If the faileur respect the *Object*, either *terminatively*, where the creature is made the *term* and *ultimate Object*, as in *Ahab's* Idolatry, and the *Papists Adoration* of the *Bread* in the *Eucharist*, or *mediately*, as in *Jeroboam's case*, and the *Jews*, relating to the *golden Calf*, or *Micah's*; all which worshipped the *true God*, though by an *Image*, and using an Image as a mean of their Worship (as the Papists now do in their *Veneration of their Images*) This is *Idolatry*, called in Scripture *Whoredom*, spiritual Whoredom; and as *Adultery* in marriage, so this is the highest sin can be committed in Worship, and which God hath more severely punished at all times, than any other sins People have been guilty of. If the faileur respect the *Acts*, or the manner; if it be only internal, it is *Hypocrisie*, if in the *external Acts* or *Manner*, it is *Superstition*, (such are the *Papists Salt Oil, Cream, Spittle*, superadded to the Institution for *Baptism*, and an hundred other Rites and Ceremonies used in all parts of their *Worship*.)

7. It is very observable, that *from the beginning of the Church there hath been a strange Itch in men*, to be adding and mixing their own fancies, inventions, and Will-worship with the true *Worship of God*. God gave unto *Moses* the *particular Rule*, and *Law of his Worship*; he communicated it to the People. *David* added to it, but no more than God by his Spirit directed, as appeareth; 1 *Chron.* 28. 19. *All this*, said *David*, *the Lord made me to understand by his hand upon me, in writing.* If you would know what that was, *v.* 12, 13. *The Pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the Courts of the House of the Lord, and of all the Chambers round about, of the Treasuries of the House of God, and of the Treasuries of the dedicate things also for the courses of the Priests and Levites, and for all the work of the Service of the House of the Lord*: Texts of Scripture which they are not aware of, who bring in *David* as an instance of a *Prince*, who added new *Acts*, or *Modes*, or *Rites* and *Ceremonies* in the Worship of God. *David* ordered no more than the Lord had made him to understand in writing, by his Spirit, and by his hand upon him. One would think that mens common reason should judge it safest to keep to the Divine Rule, and that it should be the easiest thing. But so vain hath man been in all Ages, that you shall find they could never

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content themselves with that Rule, but as if they had had a mind to pull down the Vengeance of God upon them, they were continually devising new *waies* and *methods*, after the example of other *Nations*, and copying out their Idolatries and Superstitions. The *Jews* must make a golden Calf in imitation of the *Egyptians*, then they fall in with the Idols of the *Moabites*. *Micah* must have an Image. *Jeroboam* must set up *Calves* at *Dan* and *Bethel*. In short, this was the constant vanity of the *Jews* to all reasonable mens just admiration. Christ left us a perfect Rule for Worship under the New *Testament*. But how soon was the *Primitive Church*, in matter of Worship, turned aside from the *simplicity* of the Gospel. It kept *Doctrine* in good degrees of Purity, for five hundred years after Christ, but the Purity of Worship was abated in many places within less than three hundred years, and every Age still grew worse and worse, till the *Pope* got into the Saddle, and then that *Pope* was no body who could not think upon one trifle or other to be added to the *Rituals of Worship*: Till the *Popish Worship* came up to be what it is at this day, a mixture of *Paganish*, *Jewish*, and *Christian Rites*. And it is a very hard thing for any who readeth the Gospel, and observeth Christ's Rules, and the Apostles Practice and Rules for *Worship* and *Ordinances*, to find any thing amongst them which hath upon it Christ and the Apostles *Stamp* and *Impression*.

8. *In all times this hath been a temptation to sincere Professors, and many both Ministers and People, individual Believers and Churches, to deviate from the Divine Rule.* Either the Commands of Superiours have prevailed, (as in *Jeroboam*'s time) it is laid to the charge of the *Israelites*, *Hos.* 5. 11. *That they willingly followed the Commandment.* (It is like some not very willingly neither, but the more of their will was in it, the greater the guilt was, and they are chiefly blamed) so *Micah* 6. 16. The *Statutes of* Omri *are kept*. Or else the Example of their Leaders in *Church* or *State* have had the force of a Law upon them: Or the *gaudry* or *specious pretences* made for things introduced, have had a force upon them. Many things having as (the Apostle saith) *a shew of Wisdom, and Will worship, and a neglecting of the body.*

8. And lastly, *When these things have happened, they have been the blackness and pollution of those Souls, and those Churches that have been so far prevailed upon. Black* and *white* in this case must be determined and adjudged from a strict adherence to, or a deviation from the Divine Rule. Those that are brought over to such *compliances*,

pliances have discoloured themselves more or less, according to the degree wherein they have offended. They have *kept others Vineyards*, but *their own they have not kept*. The trust which their *Lord and Master* committed to them, as to the *Ordinances* of *Worship*, they have not kept. 1. These things bring a *blackness* and *unloveliness* upon the Soul, or upon a Church *in the Eyes of God, and of Jesus Christ*. He may not presently give them a Bill of Divorce, and say unto them, they are not his People, but he looks upon them with an ill Eye, as a *speckled Bird*, Jer. 12. 9. *Mine Inheritance* (saith God) *is become unto me as a speckled Bird*; they kept something of *Divine* impressions and institutions, but they were *speckled*; they had some colours fetched from the *Moabites*, and *Ammonites*, and *Philistins*, &c. It is his will that those who worship him, should worship him according to his will, *in Spirit*, and *in Truth* (such the Father seeketh to worship him) now these things spoil the truth of *Divine Worship* (which must be measured from a Divine Institution:) And they spoil the spirituality of it, reducing *Carnal Ordinances*, and setting them up instead of the *Spiritual Worship* of God. Such indeed the *Jews* had for a time, as you read, *Heb.* 9. 10. but they were to hold no longer, than *until the time of Reformation*. The Gospel-worship was to be *exclusive*, not only of *Ordinances* that were *typical*, prefiguring a better and most excellent Sacrifice and Service, which were fulfilled the *Antitypes* being come, but it was also exclusive of *Carnal Ordinances*, such as were pleasing and gratifying to the flesh and outward man. The Worship of God according to Christ's Institution, was to be more reasonable, plain and spiritual. 2. Nay, Errours in the matters of the Worship of God, do not only defile, and make the Soul guilty, but exceeding guilty. Errours of Worship look like controulments of the Divine Wisdom, who sent his Son, and his Apostles to establish a Rule of Worship. These additaments speak the Established Rule imperfect, for otherwise they must be idle and superfluous, nothing of which nature is to be admitted in so grave and sacred an action. The Assertion of the Divine Rule as not perfect in the matter of Worship, reflecteth upon our Saviour either as *not knowing* what it is that in worship would be most acceptable to his Father, or as not *faithful in the House of God*. Or finally, as carelessly leaving things of that nature to the wills and fancies of men, as whose wildness even from the beginning of the world to that time, had shewed it self in nothing more. But besides, how can we better measure the greatness of any guilt, than by the

Revelations of God's will and wrath againſt it, and in reference to it. If you obſerve the Old Teſtament throughout from the time of the *Iſraelites* coming out of *Egypt*, to their coming out of *Babylon*, you ſhall find the will of God fully revealed againſt no one ſin, or kind of ſin like this of corruption, and faileurs in the matter of his Worſhip, ſo as ſuch Souls muſt needs be black in the Eyes of Chriſt, becauſe guilty, and that not in an ordinary degree.

2. Hence alſo theſe things have made them black *in the Eyes of the ſincerer part of Chriſtians*. Thus doubtleſs were the *Iſraelites* in *Jeroboam's time*, not only to the men of *Judah*, who adhered to the true Worſhip of God, and the ſincerer part of the Ten Tribes, who left them, and came to *Hieruſalem* to *worſhip*: But the generality of the *Iſraelites* in *Ahab's* times, in the ſight of *Elijah*, and thoſe ſeven thouſand whom God told *Elijah*, he had at that time in *Iſrael*, who had not *bowed their knee to* Baal, *nor kiſſed him with their lips*.

Uſe. The Uſe of this will be very ſhort; only *warning us to be very tender in this point*; very careful of having to do with theſe Vineyards. It is inconſiſtent with the keeping of our own, the things which God hath committed to our truſt. It renders Churches, and particular Souls alſo *black*. It is an abatement to our beauty and comelineſs. Theſe things are *ſpots* in our beauty, ſhadows to our glory. Nothing more offendeth the Eyes of the Divine Glory; nothing more provoketh the Lord to jealouſie. To thoſe who conſideringly read the Hiſtory of the Jewiſh Church recorded in the Old Teſtament, nothing need be added upon this Argument. I come now to the ſecond ſenſe of theſe words, to which I told you I more inclined to. From whence the Propoſition is this;

Prop. *That great intanglements in ſecular affairs will make the Spouſe of Chriſt to appear black.*

Demas did once appear white; twice you have an honourable mention of him, *Col.* 4. 14. Luke *the beloved Phyſician, and* Demas *ſalute you*. He is reckoned amongſt *Paul's fellow-labourers*, *Philemon*, *v.* 24. but the world made him black, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. *Demas* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *hath forſaken us, and imbraced the preſent world*. *Martha* was doubtleſs *white*, in her Lord's Eyes, yet being *cumbred* about many things, ſhe appeared *ſomething black*. *Mary* had *choſen the better part*, *Luk.* 38. 40, 41. The Apoſtles *left their Nets* when they *followed Chriſt*: When therefore one askt leave of our Saviour before he followed him, to go and *bury his dead*; Chriſt replied, *Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou me*. You know the excuſes thoſe made,

made, *Matth.* 22. that were invited to the *Marriage Feast*; one had bought a *Farm*, another had bought *five yoke of Oxen*. Our Saviour hath determined, *Matth.* 6. 24. *No man can serve two Masters, but either he will cleave to the one, and neglect the other; or neglect the one, and be overcareful for the other.* What need we any Scripture in the case; shew me that man or woman that is intangled in a multitude of worldly affairs, and hath not lost something of his beauty (if he or she ever had any) as to the power and practice of Religion & Holiness. But it will be demonstratively clear to us, if we consider either how much of our time the world will take up, or how much of our strength and spirits, how it will distract and divide us; how much it will allure and intice us, or to how many scandals it will expose us. Of all these I shall speak a word or two.

1. I say first, if we consider how *much of our time worldly occasions take up.* All humane actions require *time* as well as *place.* There is no religious action, but requireth time; and the more time is spent in our worldly employments, the less must, or can be spent in religious duties, the more our intanglements are in secular affairs, the less time we must spend in the acts of our more immediate homage to God; Alass, how little time hath he who is much imployed in the world, for reading, hearing, praying, for any religious service, and this is the ordinary plea that men make for the non-performance of them, they have no time to read the Scriptures, or to pray in their Families, or to instruct them, or to hear the Word, or to imploy their thoughts upon spiritual things. *Solomon* saith of the *covetous man, that the multitude of his riches will not let him sleep.* It may be said of others, the multitude of their businesses will not let them pray, or keep up any course of Religion in their Families, it suffers but a few to spend the Lords Sabbath as they ought to do, they are so far from sparing God any of their own time, that they are more ready to steal his time, though it be but one day of seven.

2. Secondly, Worldly businesses do not only take up much of our time, but also much *of our spirits and strength*, God doth not only require our *love*, and such acts of homage in testification of our love as he hath prescribed, but also that we should *love him*, and do those acts with *all our hearts, with all our might, and strength*; an excess of worldly labour, and business, wasts our Spirits, takes away that might, and strength which we should spend in the service of God. Ah what heartless, life less prayers, and religious duties are performed by men and women taken up with an undue proportion of secular imployments?

3. Thirdly, They fill the head with a *multitude of distractions*, 1 Cor. 7. 35. The Apostle upon this account, v. 34. commendeth a *single life* to those to whom God had given that gift, for, saith he, *The unmarried Woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in Body and Spirit: but the married Woman careth for the things of the World, that she may please her Husband. And this* (saith he) *I speak to you for your own profit, not that I might cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that you may attend upon the Lord, without distraction.* Distractions in religious services, though they appear not to the world, yet really are the blackness of the Soul, and it is our duty (as much as in us lyeth) to serve the Lord with the greatest attention of our thoughts, and with as few distractions as we can; now the more we are incumbred with secular affairs, the greater we shall find our distractions in the service of God. For, as it is upon the ringing of a Bell, though the man's hand be off the Rope, and the Bell begins to be still, yet for some time we shall discern a din in the sides of the Bell, caused from its former motion and agitation: So will every observing Christian find, that when his hand is off his secular business, yet his head will for some time be working upon it; and this more especially sheweth a *preparation* of heart necessary for those in particular, who are much imployed in worldly business, before they draw nigh to God in the Solemn Duties of his Worship, that the noise of their secular affairs may be out of their heads, and they may serve the Lord without *distractions*, and not be like to the People, whom God complaineth of, *Ezek.* 33. 31. *They said come, and let us go and hear the Word of the Lord.* And (saith God) *they come unto thee as the People cometh, and sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouths they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.* Christ (in the Parable of the *Sower*) *compareth some hearers of the Word to the ground that received the Seed amongst Thorns, the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choked the Word, and made it become unfruitful.* It is a great blackness of a Christian, not to have his heart with God in Religious Services, so as the Lord (as the *Prophet* expresseth it) *is nigh in his mouth, and far from his reins*, and it is a *blackness* that will cover the face of every man and woman that converseth too much with the world. *Paul* therefore rightly adviseth the *Corinthians*, that they should use the world in a careless manner, that those that *rejoyced* in the affluences of it, should be *as if they rejoyced not*, and those that

that bought, *as if they possessed not*, and *those that used the world, as not abusing it.* But (saith he) I would have you without *carefulness*, 1 *Cor.* 7. 30, 31, 32.

4. Worldly *imployments* have often an ill influence upon Christians, to *intice, and allure them to sin*, not only by omissions of duty, but by the commissions of things which are contrary to their duty, there is a sensible sweetness in worldly enjoyments, and those are the product of worldly business and imployment. The Devil baiteth all his Hooks with some piece of the World or other. Some with the sensibly sweet part of it, some with the gay, and splendid part of it, some with the richer, and more profitable part of it. It is an hard thing for Christians to keep Vineyards, and not drink some of that intoxicating Wine which is the fruit of them. When *Samuel* gave up his account as a *Judge*, in 1 *Sam.* 12. 3. *Behold* (saith he) *here I am, witness against me before the Lord* —— *whose Ox have I taken, or whose Ass have I taken, or whom have I defrauded, whom have I oppressed, or of whose hand have I received any bribe? Paul* in like manner thus acquitteth himself to the *Church of Ephesus*, Acts 20. 33. *I have coveted no Mans Silver, or Gold, or Apparel.* But shew me the Man or Woman that hath been much incumbred with worldly affairs, and can say; *I have coveted no Mans House, or Land, or Silver, or Gold*; or that can say; To whom have I told a lie for my gain, or said it hath cost me so much, when indeed it did not? Or whom have I done injustice to in a bargain? Commonly the best of the Market which such Christians have, is that of *Zacheus*, *Luke* 19. *If I have taken any thing from any man by unjust dealings, I restore him fourfold.*

5. Lastly, *A too great incumbrance with the world, leaves a blot upon Christians in the common repute of the world*, if they escape real blots from it. Holy Men in the Greek are called ἅγιοι that is, men who are not *Earthly*, and the world expects it of such as profess to *Religion* and *Godliness*, that they should be persons looking for *better Houses* then those made of *Clay*, even an House in the Heavens not made with hands, and for a *better Country*, and a more *induring substance.* Hence a too great pursuit of the world becometh a greater blot to Persons professing to an heavenly conversation, then unto others. *Our conversation* is in Heaven (saith the Apostle) πολίτευμα, our trading and business is in Heaven. I shall only add two or three words for application of this discourse.

This in the first place, *giveth us all an opportunity to bewail the* Use 1.

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disadvantage we have all received from the fall of Adam. It was a curse which upon the fall fell upon all the Posterity of *Adam*, Gen. 3. 19. *In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat thy Bread, till thou return to the ground.* I do not think that if man had continued in innocency, he should have lived idly, but *Mercers* opinion is very probable, his labour should rather have been for delight, then for necessity, or rather, his labour should not have been so great, as now it is; the *Thorns* and *Thistles* which the ground now naturally brings forth, and in the prevention, and extirpation of which the labour of the Husbandman is so much, were clearly the effect of the curse upon the Earth, *Gen.* 3. 18. a lively-hood for the Sons of Men had doubtless been got at a cheaper rate, with lesser labour, and man had been at a great deal more liberty, and leisure for a communion with God, and have had more time for his immortal Soul, then his worldly occasions will now permit, or allow. This may be a profitable meditation for the poorer sort of Christians, whom the need of Bread for themselves, and the want of a just provision for their Families, restrain from spending so much time in communion with God as they would, to sit down, and think of the woful effect, and fruit of the sin of *Adam*, that first sin of man, which reduced the Sons and Daughters of men to these miserable necessities.

Use 2. Secondly, Observe from hence, *what an advantage those have, whom the liberal hand of Divine Providence hath delivered from such a miserable servitude to secular affairs.* If they will make themselves slaves, and drudges to the World, they may, but the Providence of God hath not put them upon any necessity so to do. God hath given them Estates to live upon, Servants to toil for them. I will but offer two things to the consideration of these.

1. *How inexcusable will you be if you do not keep your own Vineyards well?* Your own Vineyards are your Souls, those immortal Substances, ordained to an Eternity, ennobled with Reason, and many gifts and faculties, by which, if you will, you may bring forth much fruit to the honour and glory of God; if now you be not found mighty in the Scriptures, much in reading, hearing, prayer, close in your walking with God, *&c.* You cannot plead that you want leisure: A morning and evening Service God under the Law required, and in the same proportion doubtless under the Gospel, though not by way of Sacrifice properly so called. I observe of *David* and *Daniel*, that they prayed thrice in a day, *Psal* 55. 17. *Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud* (saith *David.*)

David.) Of *Daniel* we read, *Dan.* 6.10. that *he kneeled three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks unto God, as he did before-time.* They were both *great men*, and at more leisure than ordinary *Jews.* they considered this; and as God had doubled their portions, so they thought it reasonable in some measure to proportion their duties to their circumstances.

2. Secondly, *Consider how little you will have to say, if you so far intangle your selves in the world, as it becometh a snare to your Souls.* Who pitieth him that is burned, who for meer wantonness puts his finger in the fire? Hath God given us *food* and *rayment*? *Jacob* begged no more. The Apostle commandeth us, if we have so much, to be *therewith content.* It is an excellent Exhortation which the Apostle hath given, and those are especially capable to receive to whom God hath given a plenty in this world, *Heb.* 13. 4. *Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with those things which you have, for God hath said, I will never leave nor forsake you.*

Let this *caution us all* (in the last place) *to take heed how we keep Vineyards*; how we make our selves drudges and slaves to secular imployments. Take heed of such a Service to the world as is inconsistent with that duty and service which you owe unto God. You cannot serve two Masters, you cannot serve *God* and *Mammon.* Suffer me to allude to that of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 5. 9, 10. *I wrote* (saith he) *to you an Epistle, not to keep company with Fornicators, yet not altogether with the Fornicaters of this world, or with the Covetous, or the Extortioners, or the Idolaters, for then you must go out of the world; But now I have wrote to you, not to keep company, if any Brother,* &c. I do but allude to the Text. *Brethren,* I have this day been speaking to you to have a care of medling with the world, because it wasts your time, spends your spirits, distracts your thoughts, allureth and inticeth you to the too much love of it, because it will be a blot upon your Profession, yet I would not be understood, as if I had been perswading you to the lives of lazy *Monks*, and *Nuns*, and *Hermites*; if you will have nothing to do with the world, you must not live in it. God hath commanded us *in the sweat of our face to eat our bread.* The Apostle bids, that those who would *not labour, should not eat*, and hath told us, that he would have us to *labour with our hands, that we might have something to give to those that want*, and hath told us, that he who *provideth not for his family is worse than an Infidel*, and hath *denied the Faith.* Only take heed how you converse Use 3.

verse with it, that you be not by it defiled, that it takes not up too much of your time, nor wasts too much of your spirits and strength; that it leadeth you not into temptation, distracteth not your hearts in holy duties. *Keep thy foot when thou goest into the House of God*; look to your thoughts and affections, when you draw nigh unto God in holy services and duties; use the world so, as thou mayest have time for *Religious duties in thy family*, and mayest not by thy worldly concerns, be distracted in them. I would speak to you in this case, as *Paul* doth in the case of servitude to men, and of Marriage. Are you by the Providence of God loosed from the world? seek not to be bound to it. Do your necessities call, and for the present bind you to it? Till God by favourable Providence loosen you from it, do not loosen your selves by idleness and lazineſs. It is possible thou mayest be God's free-man, while thy necessities bind thee to worldly business. I confess thou hast an hard task, but (saith the Apostle) *Let every man in the Calling wherein, and whereto he is called, abide therein with God.* Mark that last term, not *without* God, not in a neglect of his duty to God, but *with God.* Labour to have *manum in clavo, oculos in cœlo*, to be in thy heart, thoughts and affections *with God*, whiles thou art imployed in thy lower business and concerns in this life.

Sermon XL.

Canticles 1. 6.

—— But my own Vineyard I have not kept.

THe Spouse (by which I understand the Church of Christ, and every particular *believing Soul* that is a true member of it) is yet apologizing for her blackness, or appearing blackness, from the causes of it, three of which she hath already assigned. 1. *Her afflictions*, or persecutions. *The Sun hath looked upon me.* 2. Her opposition from *false Brethren. My Mothers Children were angry with me.* 3. Her submission to *Idolatrous or Superstitious Rites.* Or *her too great intanglements in secular affairs. They made*

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me (saith she) *the keeper of their Vineyards.* She comes now to a fourth, *Her own too much negligence. My own Vineyard I have not kept.*

2. The Spouse had hitherto not much charged her self, she had charged her *blackness* upon her *afflictions* and *Persecutions*, & upon the *opposition* she had met with from false Brethren, and upon her *intanglement* in *Secular affairs*, but was there no fault in her self; here now she comes to lay much of the blame upon her self: *My own Vineyard* (saith she) *I have not kept.* Gods dispensations of Providence to me (saith she) have been some cause of my blackness: The opposition I have met with from false Brethren have yet been a greater cause, but the truth is (saith she) notwithstanding both these, had not the fault been my own, I had not been so black. I might have kept my Vineyard better then I have done. *The* truely gracious, and humble Soul will not as to its failings excuse it self wholly. It may charge something upon *forreign causes* out of its self, either from *God* or *Satan* or men, but will not discharge its own naughty and corrupt heart. The hypocrite chargeth *God*, and the *Devil* and *men* highly, but seldom chargeth himself, or if at all very faintly. The reason lyeth in the pride of his heart which will not suffer it to stoop so low as to give God glory, or to take any shame to its self.

2. Secondly, Observe what words they are which these words immediately follow, *They made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but my own Vineyard I have not kept.* The Soul that is too much abroad is ordinarily too little at home, he or she that must have an Oar in every ones *Boat* seldom hath his own Boat well governed; Such a Soul is like the gadding housewife, whose own house rarely is well lookt after. This happeneth especially when the Soul is much abroad about secular concerns; the Soul though it be of a Spiritual nature, yet is very capable of being laden with, and mired in *thick Clay.* No Soul is so careless of things of an Eternal concern, as those Souls which are most careful and sollicitous about things transitory, and perishing. There is a kind of inconsistency betwixt the business of the world, and the business of Heaven, the present world, and that which is to come. Nor is any Church so neglective of the *Vineyard*, with which God hath betrusted it, as that Church that hath bowed down to imposition of false worship. But I

shall not largely discourse either of these points, though there be a good foundation in the text for it. There are yet two other.

3. Thirdly, It is the Spouse that here complaineth, saying, *My own Vineyard I have not kept.* Hence observe, *Even Gods own People are too ready to neglect the Vineyard with which God hath intrusted them.*

4. Fourthly, In that she assigneth this as one, and that no small cause of her blackness, observe,

Prop. *The Churches, or particular Christians negligence in keeping of their own Vineyard, is one main cause of their appearing blackness.* This includeth the other. I shall therefore discourse them together; I shall handle this by inquiring,

1. *What is the Spouses own Vineyard.* 2. *Wherein the keeping of this Vineyard doth lye;* 3. I shall shew you, *That even the Spouse of Christ is apt to neglect her own Vineyard.* 4. I shall shew you *what the Ordinary causes of this negligence are.* 5. Then I shall shew you how this doth cause her to appear *black.* After which I shall make some application of the discourse.

Qu. 1. 1. There is no man that liveth, be he believer or unbeliever, but were he sensible of it, hath a Vineyard committed to him by God to keep; It is *his Soul:* Nor is this interpretation of the *Metaphor* without some foundation in holy Writ, The Lord expressing the sinful works of the Jews saith, *Deut.* 32. 32. *Their Vine is of* Sodom, *and of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, & their clusters are bitter. Their Wine is the poison of Dragons, and the cruel venom of Asps.* Works, you know are the fruit of the *Soul*, as *Wine*, and *Grapes*, are the *fruits* of *the Vine.* As God when he first created man trusted him with a *garden* to keep, so he never breath into man the breath of life, so as he becomes a living Soul, but he gives him a Soul to till, cultivate and take care of. The Soul of man, is a Soil naturally prone to bring forth weeds, briars and thorns, yet capable also to admit plantations of *grace* and *vertue* (for grace grows not naturally in the Soul more then the Vine doth in the Vineyard,) I might shew you many other particulars, by which this sense of the *Metaphor* might be justified but I forbear that discourse.

2. Secondly, You may here by *Vineyard* understand whatsoever God hath committed to a mans trust to be kept, maintained, and looked after by him. Now all this, considering man singly, & personally, is summed up in two things; *The profession of faith* 3.

and

and the *Profession of holiness*. 1. *A profession of faith*, both of the *Doctrine* of faith, and of *the grace or habit of faith*. It lyeth upon a Christian to keep both. 2. The *profession of holiness* (which is indeed but the practice of faith, for that worketh by Love and the fruits of holiness) must proceed from the root of faith. This is every Christians *Vineyard* and indeed the Vineyard of his Soul, is not kept without the keeping of these. Hence *David* glorieth, that he *kept the ways of the Lord*, *Psal.* 18. 21. *Paul kept the faith*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. *David* kept the *Lords testimonies*, his Law, his Precepts, his Word, *Psal.* 119. 22, 55, 56, 67. The Church of *Philadelphia* is commended for keeping the Lords Word, *Revel.* 3. 8. The word of his patience, *v.* 20. This is the Vineyard of every Christian according to the more publick or private station which he hath in the Church of God.

2. *The Church of Christ* hath a *Vineyard* also. Indeed the Church is her self compared to a Vineyard, *Isa.* 5. and in the parable of him who let out his *Vineyards to husbandmen* (but in that sense Christ is himself the *Keeper* of it; Onely he *lets it out to husbandmen*, intrusting certain Officers of his own appointment with the managery of the affairs of it, but himself hath such a Superintendency upon it, and so keepeth it, that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. The Church hath a Vineyard to keep; what is this Vineyard, but the *Doctrine of faith*? The *Ordinances* of our great Lord for *worship*, and for *discipline*: These are the Churches Vineyard. *Paul* speaking of the Church of the *Jews*, saith, that unto them were *committed* the *Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 2. *Paul* saith, the dispensation of the Gospel was *committed* unto him, 1 *Cor.* 9. 17. The word of reconciliation is said to be committed to the Ministers of the Gospel, 2 *Cor.* 1. 19. The Gospel was committed to Pauls *trust*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. Hence *Timothy* is spoken to to keep that which was *committed to his trust*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. The *Church* is therefore called, *The pillar*, and *ground of truth*, and is fitly compared to the Ark in which was laid up the *Pot of Manna*, signifying the word and truths of God. The *two Tables* containing the *Laws for Worship*, and our more ordinary conversation, and the *rod of Aaron* signifying the *Government and discipline of the Church*. The rules for these are laid up in the Church being part of those Oracles of God which are committed to it. It is a task which God hath layed upon his Church to keep this *Vineyard*.

Qu. 2. What it is to *keep* it we may easily gather from an understanding what it is to keep a Vineyard or nursery, or garden, &c. It signifies the keeping it clean from *Weeds* which would hinder the growth and flourishing of the plants, and return the place into its former incultivated state and condition. To keep it with digging, planting, manuring, dressing, and cultivating, that it may yield that fruit, and profit to the Owner which he expects from it, and for which he at first planted it. Hence then may easily be concluded what it is both for a particular Christian, and for a Church to keep its own *Vineyard*. The whole business lyeth in these 2 things.

1. It signifieth *a Christians keeping of his Soul from Errors, and from lusts, and corruptions.* All motions and inclinations to sin, are the Souls Weeds, and what the Souls of the best of men are too prone to, its natural fruit; and *Quod Sponte prodit lætius prodit*, naturally Weeds grow faster then induced plants. A particular Christians care in keeping the Vineyard of his Soul lies in keeping his understanding and judgment untainted with *Errour* as to *Doctrine*, in keeping his *will* from closing with *motions to sin*, whether from within, or without, and his *conscience sprinkled from Evil works*. So for the Church of Christ, her keeping her Vineyard lies in preserving in all her members a *purity of Doctrine*, in opposition to the impurity of *corrupt opinions, and errors*: A *purity of Worship* in opposition to all *Superstition* and Will-Worship, and a purity of discipline.

2. Secondly, it implieth the Souls *filling* and furnishing it self with *knowledge* and *Spiritual habits* the plants which the Lord would have to stand, and to grow in all parts of his inheritance, and in every Soul that pretendeth any relation unto him. As the Gardiner, who is intrusted with the keeping of any of your Gardens doth not keep them as he ought, unless beside the weeding of them, and purging them of Weeds and nettles, he also furnisheth them with useful plants and herbs, and keeps them duly cut and pruned, &c. So neither doth that man or woman keep the Vineyard of his own Soul, that doth not take care to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in all other good, and vertuous habits. So as to the *Church*, that Church doth not keep its own Vineyard, that doth not besides purging it self of errors, and scandals, take care also that the truths of God be duly preached, and published, and the

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Ordinances of God purely administred. This is now for the Spouse to keep, or not to keep her own Vineyard, now I say the *Spouse* of Christ, whether the *Individual* Spouse (which is every truly gracious Soul) or the *collective Spouse* Which is the Church of God is very prone to neglect *the keeping of its own Vineyard.*

This needeth no other Evidence, then the experience of all Christians and all Churches, and that in all ages. Qu. 3.

1. I say first the *Experience of particular Christians*, for *who* liveth, *and sinneth not against God?* The righteous falleth 7 times in a day; now though it be true, that many of the sins of Gods people are sins of *pure infirmity*; Either through *ignorance* or *impotency*, to resist the temptation, yet both this ignorance and impotency are often occasioned through a neglect, or not improvement of the means of knowledge and better information, and through our not preparing our selves to the Spiritual fight, putting on the whole Armor of God as we ought to have done; Avoiding occasions to Sin, abstaining from the appearances of Evil, and giving no advantage to the adversary; all which are our duties and enjoined us by the Apostle.

2. Nor Secondly either is there, or ever was any Church of God upon the Earth, that kept its own Vineyard as it ought to have done. The Church of the Jews was the only Church God had upon the Earth until the time of *John the Baptist*. Whosoever readeth their story, in the Books of *Moses*, the Books of *Kings and Chronicles*, or in the Writings of the Prophets, will find that they did not keep their *own Vineyard*. Never had any Church a trust more clearly committed to them, they could have no long disputes about any thing of the revealed will of God, if any question did arise they had an infallible rule, *Deut.* 17. for the determination of it; yet (as I told you before) as the ten Tribes made a total defection after the reigns of *David* and *Solomon*, both whose reigns made up but 80 years in the latter part of which, (in *Solomon's* time,) towards the latter end of his Reign; they also admitted very great corruptions) so in the Kingdom of *Judah* they lost what was committed to their trust many times and seldom kept it 60 years together in any degrees of purity. So that in *Josiahs* time the Book of the law was thrown about and hid in the rubbish, and found by the repairers of the house of the Lord, as you find in the story of the Book of the *Kings*. Now that this was their most wilful

neglect

neglect, appeareth by their frequent reductions though not perfect, to the Divine rule. When *Asa*, *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, *Joash*, *Josiah*, attempted it, and the plain revelation which they had of the will of God, born from the letter of the law, their way for decision of doubts about it, and the Prophets which God favoured them with, all the while that Kingdom remained. After that Church was destroyed, and the Christian Church set up, all the *Apostolical Epistles* give a proof of the proneness of Churches to neglect the keeping of their own Vineyards, and of the Lords Watchmen to sleep while the Enemy sowed tares. The same is also Evidenced by all *Ecclesiastical history*, and from the History of all modern Churches, their Deviations in *Doctrine*, *Worship* & *Discipline*, &c. testify it.

Qu. 4. Nor is the reason of this aptness in us to neglect the *keeping of our own Vineyards*, hard to be assigned.

1. The first is *the laboriousness of the work, and the crossness of it to the genius of Flesh and blood.* For a Christian to keep his heart with all diligence is no easy work, it lies much in a Christians denial of himself, taking up the Cross, mortifying his members, as to which, our flesh incessantly cries in the language of *Peter*, *Master*, *spare thy self.* So that he who doth it rows (as we say) both against wind and tide. It requires much knowledge and judgment to keep a mans self unspotted from errors, but a great degree of self denial for any man to keep himself unspotted from the pollution of the World through lust; upon this account it is that our Saviour compareth the way to heaven to a narrow way, a strait gate. And tells us that it is as easy for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle as for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. Our work is compared by our Saviour to a cutting off the right hand, and plucking out of a right Eye. In works of great labour, and difficulty, we are very prone (you know) to be remiss, and negligent.

2. But this is not all; *The native corruption and inclination in mans heart to deviate from the holy and right ways of God is a great cause.* I must confess that as to the Churches keeping its Vineyard I cannot apprehend such a difficulty in it. As to truth a man indeed cannot believe what he listeth, but the Church notwithstanding this may keep the *Doctrine of faith*; if particular Persons that are otherwise perswaded, in some points then

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the rest of the Church is, would but learn what the Apostle directs in that case; *Hast thou faith? have it to thy self, Rom.* 14. and not think themselves obliged to publish to the disturbance of a Church what is their own particular opinion. As to *Ordinances* relating to *Worship and Government*, what difficulty can there be in keeping strictly to the *Divine rule* and doing that alone which Gods Word requireth? the questions concerning that would be very few, if men did not lay hold upon some general passages, and apply them to their own fancies. Were men but fixed in this to adhere to the Divine rule without diminishing it, or without adding to it, unless in cases where such additions are apparently necessary, certainly this were all to be required in order to the Churches keeping *its own Vineyard* as to the Ordinances committed to it. But the corruption of mans heart, inclining him to interpret the will of God in a consistency to his own reason, makes all the difficulty in the Churches keeping the Doctrine of faith. And the wild humour that hath always possest men to Worship God according to their own fancies, and to create decencies, and matters of order, according to their own pleasure, and to conform their Altars to that of *Damascus*, hath been all along in the story of the Church, the cause of the Churches neglecting to keeps its proper *Vineyard*.

3. Thirdly, It is much caused from the *mixture of the world in our conversation*. This is true both as to the neglect of the particular Christian, & as to the neglect of the Church also. As to the particular Christian; we are but flesh, and have senses to be gratified with pleasures, profits, honour, *&c.* as well as with the supply of our necessities: We live in, and converse with the world, which is full of objects, that gratifie our sensitive appetite in these things; these are continual temptations to us to remit at least the care of our own souls, & to neglect our own Vineyards. The Church also while it is militant here on Earth, & considered as Visible, hath in it a great *mixture* of the world, though not of the *Pagan world*, (there must be a profession of Christ in all the Members of the Visible Church) yet, of that *world* which *lyeth in wickedness*, and it is this mixture of *Hypocrites*, with such as are the sincere Servants of God, that causeth the Church's neglect of its *Vineyard*. All the remisness in a Church of its care as to the *Doctrine*, *Worship*, and *Discipline of Christ*, proceedeth from this mixture of persons, who are no more than Visible, with such as are sincere, and true Members of the Church of Christ.

4. A fourth cause of this neglect, is mens *foolish presumptions, that they are well enough.* The work of every particular Person in keeping the Vineyard of his own Soul, is so contrary to the grain of flesh, and blood, that not only the natural man, but even the *Sanctified man* (in regard of that corruption which is yet in him) is ready to take up with short measures of it, and to think his *Vineyard* is well enough kept when indeed it is not; men are loth to be *righteous over much*, and are very apt to think that a little is enough. We are very apt to think that we do enough duty, and consider not the mark which we are to press after, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is something natural to us to think we may not only do, but over-do what God requireth of us, when alas! when we have done all we can we are unprofitable servants, *servants*, so that what we do is but our *duty, unprofitable servants*, so that what we do cometh much short of our duty. *Perfection* is what we are all bound to aim at and strive after, but withal it is what no man attaineth; not *as though I had already attained, or were already perfect* (saith the Apostle.) You know in works that are not naturally pleasing to us we are well pleased to think we have done enough. Thus it is in the business of *Religion*, and *holiness*, they are things which *please not flesh and blood*; so as we are well pleased when we can Satisfy our selves, and think that we need do no more nor go any further, and as it is with particular Christians so it is with *Churches*, all which have not *Pastors, and Governours* according to Gods own heart, nor are all the *members* of them, *members of Christ*. Now those who are not so are no great lovers of, nor *zealous* for the perfection of purity, but can take up with measures short of those which Christ hath made, and given. Hence is that neglect of the keeping their own *Vineyards* which is but too obvious in all Churches; and hence are those obvious declinations in that duty which men owe to God, and in the purity of Churches every Age is still declining, and growing worse then the former, whiles a party in the Church still studyeth more and more to wriggle their neck out of the yoke of Christ, and to get rid of some ingrateful things to flesh and blood, which a former Age retained. For as no particular Person at first runs up to the highest degree of wickedness, so seldom doth any Church at first *Apostatize*, to that degree, but gradually declineth.

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None shall need to enquire, *whence it is that this Neglect of our own Vineyards, maketh us to appear thus black*, who but consider eth that this Neglect is *contrary to the Divine rule*, which obligeth us to *keep our hearts with all diligence, Prov.* 4 23. *to strive after perfection*, and to go on unto it: and also obligeth all Churches, to keep that which is *committed to their trust*, to *keep* the Lords *Word*, &c. There is no *medium* in this case betwixt *black* and *white*. The *Whiteness, beauty* and glory of a Christian lyeth in his holding *fast of his profession*, both of *faith* and *holiness*, his keeping close to the divine rule, and herein also lyeth the whiteness, and beauty of those assemblyes of Christians which we call *Churches* and the more, or less, both of a Christians, and of a Churches beauty, and whiteness lyeth in his, or their more or less conformity to the divine rule, which being granted, their neglect of this must necessarily render them black and make them to appear so to others. Qu. 5.

This discourse may in the first place let us see, the *weakness of our faith, in our different apprehensions of our worldly, and spiritual concernments*. Certainly had we the same persuasions, that we have Souls, as that we have Bodies, as quick apprehensions of the danger of our Souls miscarriage, as we have of our bodily dangers; had we but a firm persuasion of the excellency of our Souls, above our Bodies we should have an equal, if not a greater care, to keep this *Vineyard* of our *immortal Soul*, as we have to keep our Bodies; but have we so? It is true there are some in the World, that are lazy, and slothful as to their outward concerns, they will rather steal, or beg, then work, but these are but few in comparison of others, God hath given men a body to look after, with what diligence doth he keep that? he riseth up early, lyeth down late, and eateth the bread of carefulness, and all this for the keeping of his body, but for this Vineyard of the Soul of man, how few are they that look after it? how little is the diligence that is used in keeping of that? who attendeth the health of his Soul with that diligence that he attendeth his bodily health? or the maintenance and food of his Soul, with the same diligence that he attendeth his bodily food and sustenance? or the adorning of his Soul, with the same care and diligence that he attendeth the adorning of his body? What doth this argue? doth it not speak either that men have no great opinion that they have immortal Souls, or that they have no great Use 1.

opinion of the price, and value of them, or that they do not think there is so much care necessary for the keeping of them?

Use 2. We may observe from hence, upon what the *blackness* of *particular Souls*, and Churches, is principally *to be charged*. There may be some blame to be laid upon forrein causes. Temptations from the World and the Devil, but the greatest blame must be laid upon our selves. Did we keep our watch so strictly as we might keep it, Temptations could have no such power upon us as they have, the Devil and the world can do no more then strike fire, the tinder that receiveth it must be in our own box; when the Prince of the World came to Christ, he could do nothing against him, *because he found nothing in him*. If the Devil found nothing in our Souls he could do nothing against them but only disturb them. The like may be said for the corruptions of Churches; If the husbandmen did not sleep the Enemy could not sow so many tares. All corruptions, in the Doctrine of faith, in matters of Worship and discipline, have crept in by the Officers of Churches not keeping their *own Vineyards*. The *man of sin*, the *Western Antichrist*, had never so hacknyed the Western Churches, if they had not like *Issachar Couched under the burden*, and bowed their necks down to the Yoke.

Use 3. I shall shut up this discourse with a few Words of *Exhortation* to all to *keep their own Vineyards*. I shall not here speak to the duty of *husbandmen* (Spiritual husbandmen) to keep the *Vineyard of the Church*; it were a Proper discourse from the Doctrine, but I am not in a proper auditory. And besides would every particular *Christian* but keep the Vineyard of his own Soul, the care of *Magistrates*, and *Ministers* who are the keepers of *Christs Vineyard* might be less. Christians woful remissness, and neglect in keeping the more particular Vineyards of their own Souls, is that which makes the work of the *keepers* of the more *publick Vineyard* of the *Church* so *difficult* and almost *unpracticable* to them. Let me therefore only lay a little stress here, as we say, if every man would sweep his own door the street would be clean: So it is true if every one would look to the Vineyard of his own *particular Soul*, or his *particular family*, the Church of God would be clean, for that is made up but of particular families, and particular Souls. When these *Vineyards* are kept, the more publick *Vineyard* which is made up of these must also

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be kept. Wherein the keeping of our Vineyards lyeth you have heard, *viz.* 1. In the keeping of it clear of *weeds* and *noxious* plants. 2. In the *cultivation*, and *manuring* such plants as are fit for it. In these two things lyeth the keeping of Gardens and Vineyards amongst men: in these two things lyeth the keeping of our Vineyards in a *metaphorical* & more *spiritual* sense, you whom God hath trusted with the care of others, have a larger Vineyard then those that are solute. The Wife is a part of the Husbands Vineyard, Children are their parents Vineyard, Servants are their Masters *Vineyard*. Every mans family is his Vineyard. If any be single his Soul is his Vineyard. The keeping of your Vineyards lyeth in a keeping of them free from Scandal, not suffering sin upon any that stand in any relation to you; we ought not to do it as to our neighbour, much less as to any that are our neighbours in the neareſt and ſtricteſt ſenſe, and who ſtand in neareſt concernment to us. *David* reſolved to *walk within his houſe with a perfect heart--- that the faithful in the land ſhould dwell with him, and that he that walked in a perfect way ſhould ſerve him, that he that wrought deceit ſhould not dwell within his houſe, he that telleth lyes ſhould not abide in his ſight*, Pſal. 101. 2, 7, 8. *Abraham commanded his Children, and his houſhold after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do juſtice, and judgment*, *Gen.* 18. 19. For you that have only the Vineyards of your own Souls to keep, neglect them not; I will preſs this upon you with 2 conſiderations which I ſhall recommend to you.

1. The firſt ſhall be, *The value of the Vineyards with which God hath betruſted to you.* The Vineyards are Souls, either your own Souls, or the Souls of others, or both. Which way ſoever you conſider a Soul, whether as a *Spiritual* being, or as a *reaſonable* being, indued with noble faculties, or as an *immortal being* that cannot periſh with the body, as that part of man, which beareth the moſt lively impreſs of the image of God, as that which was *purchaſed* by the blood of Chriſt, and which is the habitation of God through the Spirit in which the holy Spirit may dwell, that which is ordained to an Eternity either of happineſs or miſery; which way ſoever you look upon your own Souls, or the Souls of thoſe who are committed to your truſts, they are noble Vineyards. Reaſon teacheth us to take the beſt care of our beſt and moſt excellent things, I have thought it often a moſt unreaſonable vanity of ſome Gentlemen, to take a great

deal more care of the managery, of an *horse* or *hawk* then of their *Sons*. It is every whit as great, if not a much greater vanity, to take a greater care of the bodies, and *outward concerns* of their relations, then of their Souls. What can be laid in ballance with a Soul which will not be found too light for it? what shall be offered in exchange for it, and not rejected as of too low a consideration? Of what value think you that must be which was bought with the blood of him who was the Son of God? Consider of what value the profession of your faith, and the practice of holiness is; your faith is called *precious* faith, and of *holiness*, it is said that without it none shall see the Lord.

2. Secondly. Consider *who it is that hath betrusted you with them. Behold* (saith God) *All Souls are mine*, It is God that hath given unto us the *trust* of our own Souls and the trusts of *others Souls* for all Souls are originally Gods. He *breaths* the Soul into the body of a man, he puts Souls into mens families, I beseech you consider here these particulars: 1. *That every Person of reputation and honour valueth a trust*, and thinks it beneath a man, not to discharge a trust he undertakes with some degrees of faithfulness. We see in our daily experience, that as men naturally Love to be trusted, so they have a kind of natural religion, for the keeping and discharging of it. This is what makes men consciencious as to the wills of Persons that are dead. All Souls are *trusts*, our particular Souls are trusts, the Souls of our relations are trusts to us. The property of all Souls is Gods, the trust of them is in us, I wish this were but well thought on; the wicked men mentioned by the *Psalmist* said, *our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* *Psal.* 12. 4. men think that they may do what they will with what they have a full propriety in. This is a great cause of mens neglect of their Souls, they dream too much of an absolute property they have in them, they say, their Souls are their own. *Who is Lord over them?* would men consider their Souls a little more as trusts they would take a stricter care of them. 2. Tho *we naturally* value all trusts, yet such as our *Superiours or near friends commit to us we yet value more.* A dread of our Superiours makes us to value and take care of what they have committed to our trust a love to our friends makes us value theirs; our Souls, and the Souls of those that are in relation to us, are a trust committed to us by the Lord of the whole Earth by Christ who hath

Ezek. 18. 4.

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dyed for us. So that here is both the relation of a *Superiour* and of a *friend* in the case, obliging us to take a due care for the keeping of our Vineyards. 3. *The more eyes we have upon us, observing how we manage our trust, the more careful we are (ordinarily) as to the managery of it.* This is a trust as to which God who hath entrusted us, hath an Eye to us how we discharge it; this needeth no great proof, whoso believeth Gods Omniscience, and considereth the observing Eye which God keepeth upon all men, and all their actions, so as they are all written in a Book, must know and believe this. Lastly the more *accountable we are for any trust*, the more we take our selves obliged to keep it with all diligence. The trust of every mans Soul is a trust for which he must account, *Rom.* 14. 12. So then *every one of us shall give an account of himself unto God we must give an account to him who is ready to judge both the quick and the dead*, 1 *Pet.* 4 5. of what must we give an account, but of our *Souls?* their *Elicit* & *Imperate* acts, the Apostle tells us that it is the duty of Pastors and Governours of Churches, to *watch for Souls* because they *must give an account*. Certainly it is as much the duty of every particular Christian to watch over his own Soul, because his Soul is a trust, of which he must give an account to him that is *ready to come to judge both the quick and the dead*. Nor are we only to give an account of our Souls, but of the Souls committed to our charge. This the Apostle telleth us plainly, *Heb.* 13. 17. as to those who are Governors, and Pastors of Churches, and God told it *Ezechiel*, *Ezech.* 3. 18. *Son of* man (saith he) I have made thee a watch-man to the house of *Israel* --- *v.* 18. *When I say unto the wicked thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his Life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.* (This is that which made *Chrysostom* think that there were but a few Ministers that would be saved.) But it is as true concerning *Superiors* in other relations; God never bringeth a wife into the bosom of any husband, nor addeth a Child or Servant to any family, but he saith to the husband of that wife, to the Parent of that Child or those Children, to the Master of those Servants, *All Souls are mine. The Souls of these Persons I commit to thy trust, if thou doest not warn them from sinful courses, if thou doest not walk towards them as a man of knowledge, and bring them up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord, they*

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shall die in their ignorance, in their iniquity, but their Souls will I require at thy hand. A consideration which if duly weighed by the Sons of men, would awaken men to another kind of Government of their families, and another kind of instruction of them then I fear is ordinarily to be found in families.

2. I shall add but one thing more; The better any man keepeth the Vineyard of his own Soul, or the *Vineyard* of his family, *the more fruit he shall reap from it.* His *Vintage* will be the better, there is little fruit to be expected from a *neglected Vine.* Our Vineyards, those I mean of our own Souls and the Souls of others under our trust, do not only bring forth fruit to the honour and Glory of God but unto our selves, and that very considerable, 1. In our *peace of Conscience* here in this Life. 2. *In that glory which is the object of our future hopes.* The fruit of righteousness is peace and quietness, and assurance for ever. Keep your Vineyards, that you may drink the sweet fruit and wine thereof, that joy, and peace which is the fruit of believing, and of an holy life and conversation. This will be very pleasant to us while we live, much more, when we come to die. Lord *Remember* (saith *Ezekiah* upon his sick bed) *how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* Conscience checks us for nothing, but the neglect of some Vineyard or other, which the Lord hath intrusted us with. 2. Your *glory* hereafter will be the more. I know there is a question in Divinity whether there shall be any degrees of glory? It is hard to shew you wherein the glory of one Saint shall excel another, but I think it is plain enough that there shall be differences of glory in Saints that shall be glorified, and if so, doubtless those that have best kept their *own Vineyards*, shall have the largest penny. And those that have best discharged their trusts to the Souls of others, shall have the larger share in glory. *He that winneth Souls is wise.* And the Prophet *Daniel* tells us that *those who turn many to righteousness* shall *shine as the Stars for ever and ever.*

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Sermon XLI.

Cant. 1. 7, 8.

Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at Noon, for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy Companions.

If thou knoweſt not, O thou faireſt amongſt Women, go thy way forth by the footſteps of the Flocks, and feed thy Kids, beſide the Shepherds Tents.

IT is the Spouſe who yet continueth her ſpeech to her *Beloved*. She hath ſpoken once to him, deſiring ſome tokens of his *ſpecial* and *diſtinguiſhing love*, v. 2. *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth.* She hath ſpoken a ſecond time to him, deſiring *ſtrength* from him to *run after him.* She now putteth up a *third petition*, v. 7. *Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at noon, for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions.* To which her *beloved* replyeth, v. 8. *If thou knoweſt not (O thou faireſt amongſt Women) go thy way by the footſteps of the flocks, and feed thy Kids by the Shepherds Tents.* The words eaſily fall into two parts:

1. *The Spouſes Petition to her Beloved. Tell me O thou whom my Soul loveth,* &c. v. 7.

2. *Her Beloveds anſwer*, v. 8. *If thou knoweſt not (O thou faireſt amongſt Women,* &c.)

In the Spouſes Petition is conſiderable. 1. Her *compellation. O thou whom my Soul loveth.* 2. Her *Petition. Tell me where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at noon.* 3. *Her argument. For why ſhould I be as one who turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions.* In the anſwer is alſo conſiderable,

1. His *compellation*. O *thou fairest amongst Women.*

2. *His particular direction*, and information of her, in two things. *If thou knowest not, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.*

2. *Feed thy Kids by the Shepherds Tents.*

O thou whom my Soul loveth, or hath loved.] The Chaldee Paraphrast would have us believe, that this seventh verse was *Moses* his Petition to God, when he was about to die, for direction from him, how the People should be governed, when he should be gone, and how they should dwell amongst the Heathen, whose laws would be more grievous to the sincere part of them, then the *Sun* is to the Traveller at noon day, and asking, why she should live amongst the *Edomites*, and *Moabites*, who made Idols the companions of the true God, and *v.* 8. the same *Paraphrast* makes this to be the Lords answer, telling his *Prophet Moses*, that if they would not live under the power of the Heathen, they must *walk in his Commandments*, and be obedient to the guides he had set over them. But doubtless this is a strained sense, proceeding from the overgreat fondness of that *Interpreter*, to apply all that is said in this Song, to the *Jewish Church*. There are others who according to their different notions of these betwixt whom this Dialogue is instituted, carry these words in other senses, you know the sense which I have all along followed, is that of those (and they are the most, and the best) who make it a Dialogue betwixt the *believing Soul*, or the *Church*, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*. It is then the believing Soul that speaks in this language of a lover, O *thou whom my Soul loveth*. Christ is the primary object of the believers love, a believer loveth him, and none else, in a degree to be compared with him, or with a love any thing like that love, wherewith she loveth him. But if she loveth him, must she tell him so? *Modesty* maketh the Virgin ordinarily to conceal her passion; sinful modesty oft-times maketh her that is a spiritual Virgin to conceal her love to Christ. She that may, while she is doubting her own sincerity, conceal her love to Christ, will not conceal it, when she lives in any view of it, and can say with *Peter*, *Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee.* Nor when she is to use it as an *argument* to obtain any favour from him. Nor when she is doubting of his love to her (how unreasonably soever.) Nor is the Virgin that is too modest to publish her love to the world, so *modest* as not to own it to him whom she hath resolved upon, and chosen for her Husband. *Bernard* hath, I think too critical a note upon these words; *mark* (saith he) she doth not say whom *I love*, but *whom*

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my Soul loveth; *Spiritualem designans dilectionem*, intimating a spiritual love. But yet it is well noted by the learned *Mercer*, that the phrase signifieth more then if she had said *O my Beloved*; it is as much as if she had said, *In quem omnes meos affectus effudi* (saith *Beza*) upon whom I have bestowed my whole heart.

Tell me where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at Noon.] Thus she expresseth the thing that she would have under a metaphorical expression, the sense of which we are to enquire; keeping of Sheep, and Goats, was a very ancient, and in those times a noble employment. *Abel* was the first *Shepheard* you read of, *Gen.* 4. 2. *Rachel* was a keeper of Sheep, *Gen.* 29. 6. So was *Jacob*, and *David* (as you know) before he came to be King over *Israel*, God called him from the *Sheepfold*. Christ takes unto himself the notion of a *Shepheard*, he calleth himself the *good Shepheard*, *John* 10. 1, 2. &c. It was prophecied of him, *that he should feed his flock like a Shepheard*, *Isaiah* 45. 11. and his death was prophecied of, under the notion of *smiting the Shepheard*, *Zech.* 13. 7. *Mat.* 26. 11. The Apostle calls him the *great Shepheard*, and the *chief Shepheard*. In this dialect here, the Spouse speaks to him. It was not unusual for the Heathens to discourse matters of carnal, and sensual love, as transactions between *Shepheards*, and some whom they loved. The Holy Ghost doth the same here, he by *Solomon* discourseth this matter of Spiritual and Divine love, as a transaction betwixt a *Shepheard*, and one who dearly loved him. But what would she have? she would know where *he fed*, that is, *where he fed his flocks*, where he made them to rest at *noon*; the *noon* (as you know) is the hottest time of the day, and so by the noon I find some understanding a time of *affliction*. To this I find *Mercer*, and *Beza* inclining. *Beza* thinketh that the Church here beggeth to know how Christ would have his Church governed, and ordered in the middest of temptations, and persecutions, and beggeth for Christs fullest, and cleerest manifestations of himself to her at such a time (so saith *Bernard*,) *Mercer* thinks it is as much as if she had said, Lord I am *burnt with the Sun*; shew me that shadow, in, and with which thou usest to refresh thy Saints in the *heat of affliction*. There is a promise made to the Church, *Isaiah* 49. 10. *They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat or the Sun smite them, for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of waters shall he guide them.* Now the Spouse here (in the opinion of these Interpreters) begs to know these shadows, where the *flocks* rested at *noon*.

I must confess I more incline to another sense. The noon was the hottest time of the day, and as in our Country, where the power of the Sun is nothing so much as in those hot Countries, *Cattel* seek shadows, and resting places, where they are a little free from the heat of the weather; so they were wont to drive their flocks of Sheep into such shadowy places, where both the Shepheard, and the Sheep were more quiet and at rest, which time was the most free time of the day for the Shepheard, when any might more freely discourse him, according to that of the Poet, *Fauste precor gelidâ quando pecus omne sub umbrâ ruminet, antiquos paulum recitemus amores.* So that the Spouse desireth to know where he fed, where he made his flocks to rest at noon, That is, where she might have the most free, and uninterrupted communion with him.

For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions.] She here implieth, that without her Lords direction, she was like enough to turn aside: She beggeth she might not so turn aside. The word in the *Hebrew* is עטיה we translate it, as one *turning aside*, or that turneth aside, and so *Pagnine* interpreteth it. *Arias Montanus* translates it, *sicut operiens se*, as one that covereth her self, and indeed so the *Hebrew* word most commonly signifieth. Now this covering themselves, was either in token of *shame*, or of *sorrow*, or *modesty*. *Mourners* were wont to cover their faces, *Ezech.* 24. 17. *Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thy head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips.* It was also a token of *shame*. Harlots were wont to cover themselves, *Gen.* 38. 14. It was also done as a token, or signification of *modesty*, so you read of *Rebeccah*, *Gen.* 24. 65. when she heard of *Isaac*, his coming towards her, *she hasted, and took a vail, and covered her self*; this custom of Virgins covering themselves, was of long use in the Church of God, so that *Tertullian*, who lived 2 or 300 years after Christ, hath a particular Book to persuade the upholding of that custom, which it should seem then began to be disused. Our Translators interpret the word, *turn aside*. The cause of the difference lies in the doubtfulness, whether the *Hebrew* root be עוט or עטה the first signifieth to *turn aside*; the second to *cover*. Hence also ariseth the difference of Interpreters about the next term.

By the flocks of thy Companions.] Those who interpret the former word *turn aside*, understand by *Companions*, *Idolaters*, and *Superstitious persons*; who indeed make themselves the companions of Christ, or rather make their Idols his companions; some interpret it of

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Hereticks. Idolaters make their Idols Christs Companions, by giving that Homage to them, which is due to him alone. Thus the Papists do to their *Images*, and *Crucifixes*, to *Saints*, and *Angels*. *Hereticks* make their *leaders* Christs Companions, making them the guides of their faith and practice, which is an Homage due unto Christ alone. Indeed Christ hath properly no Companion, consider him as to his *Divine Nature*. He is, and there is none besides him, nor hath he any *Companion* as our *Mediator*, and *Intercessor*. He trode the *Winepress* alone, neither was any of the People with him, he had no Companion either in his *Kingly*, *Prophetical*, or *Priestly* Office. But he hath some who call themselves his Companions, and arrogate to themselves that title, nay, which others sinfully make his Companions. *Beza* thinks these are here meant.

2. But secondly, Christ hath some, who though they are not strictly his Companions, yet he graciously so calleth them, being (as the Apostle saith) *not ashamed to call them Brethren*, of these I should chuse to understand the text, (and though I am very tender of differing from the received translation of a Church in any matter of moment) should be more inclined, as I said before, to translate the former term, *one covered*. So the sense is, For why should I be amongst thy People *as a Mourner*, or as *one that is an Harlot*, with whom thou wilt have no communion. or fellowship? Why should I walk as one covered, either as a *Mourner*, or as a *Strumpet*, amongst thy People, whom thou hast so far owned, as to declare thy self not ashamed to call them Brethren, or Companions? This I take to be the sense of the Petition;

O thou whom my Soul loveth above all other objects whatsoever, who art my Shepheard, let me know where, and how I may enjoy communion with thee, how I may have fellowship with thee in a time of trouble and affliction, and when I may have the nearest, fullest, and most uninterrupted communion with thee, for why should I, for want of thy presence, be under a constant temptation to turn aside from a true fellowship and communion with thee to the Synagogues, and Assemblies of Idolaters. Or why should I walk amongst thy People, either as a *Mourner*, or as an Harlot, whom thou hast cast off, or divorced.

To this now, her *Beloved* answereth [*O thou fairest amongst Women*] it is an *Hebraisme*, a way they have to express the *superlative degree*, so *Luk.* 1. 28. 42, *Thou art blessed amongst Women*, that is, very much, very *highly blessed*. So the Lyon is said to be *strong among*

Beasts, Prov. 30. 30. that is, the strongest Beast. It is no more then in our dialect. *O thou that art fairest*, to whose Beauty in my Eyes no others Beauty is to be compared.

If thou knowest not] the Hebrew is אם לא תדעי לך the Septuagint translate it, ἐαν μὴ γνῶς σεαυτὴν if thou dost not know thy self, the *vulgar Latin*, *Æthiopick*, *Syriack*, and *Arabick* Translators, and indeed most ancient *Interpreters* that I meet with follow the Septuagint, and translate it, *If thou knowest not thy self.* Hence *Bernard* (upon the place) runs into a large discourse concerning Christians ignorance of themselves, and the *profitableness of our knowledge of our selves*, according to the ancient Precept of the wise man amongst the Heathen, Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν. But undoubtedly though this be a great truth, yet it is nothing to the sense of this text, where לך is a *Pleonasme*, as both *Tremellius*, *Mercer*, and *Mariana*, (three Interpreters very learned, and critical in the *Hebrew* Dialect, do all agree) so as we tranflate it truly, according to our *Idiom*, If thou knowest, tho in the *Hebrew* it be, If thou knowest to, or for thy self. It followeth,

Go thy way by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy flocks by the Shepheards Tents.] These words now contain her beloveds direction, if she were at a loss, what to do in a time of streights, or how to enjoy the most full and free communion with him, she must go her way by the *footsteps* of the *flock*. Interpreters vary in the sense of these words, according to their different notion of the former. *If thou knowest not.* Those that will not allow לך to be *Paragogical*, or *Pleonastical*, but will interpret them, *If thou knowest not thy self*, and so make the whole to be a rebuke, or chiding of the Spouse, for her ignorance, or pride, will have the *flocks* here to be the *flocks* of *Idolaters*, and *Hereticks*, and by the *Kids* here understand her own *vain imaginations*, and make this speech to be the language of an angry God, giving up a People in wrath (according to that of the Apostle) to *strong delusions to believe a lie*, for their wilful ignorance and non-improvement of the means of grace. This is the sense put upon the words by *Hierome*, *Gregory*, *Bernard*, *Aquinas*, *Lyra*, and others. And there is a truth in this, when a people continue in the bosom of a Church, under the means of grace, ignorant, proud, and unprofitable, God often in wrath giveth them over to Seducers, and leaves them to the vanities, and delusions of their own hearts (a Judgment of all others most formidable.) But certainly this is not the sense of the words. *Delrio* (though a Papist) differs from them,

and

and gives us a good reason, telling us, if that had been our Lords meaning, he would never in the same breath have called her *the fairest among Women.* Therefore *Tremellius*, both the *English*, and *Dutch Annotators*, *Deodate*, *Piscator*, *Mariana*, and others, understand here by the *footsteps of the flock, and by the Shepherds Tents*, the *Precepts*, and *Examples* of *Moses* and *Aaron*, the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles*, and the purer Church of God, and by the *Kids* mentioned, they understand particular Souls. So that the sense of the words is this.

Thou believing Soul, who in my Eyes art more beautiful, and lovely, then any other Soul in the world, if thou beest in any thing ignorant of my will, and where to meet me, and how to enjoy fellowship and communion with me, do not stray from the rule of my word, nor vary from the examples of those whom I gave for Shepherds to my People, keep close to them, to their Doctrine, and to my Ordinances administred by them. There thou shalt find me. There I rest at noon. These two verses thus opened, afford us several Propositions of Doctrine, as matter of further discourse.

Prop. 1. *Christ is he, and only he whom the believing Soul loveth.*

Prop. 2. *Though there may be a time when such a Soul may conceal, and disown its love to Christ, yet there will be a time when it will break forth, and she will acknowledge it.*

Prop. 3. *A gracious Soul, desireth nothing more then a quiet, full, and sweet communion with Christ.*

Prop. 4. *Christ hath shades where he resteth, and feedeth his flock, under the greatest, and most scorching Afflictions.*

Prop. 5. *Though a pious Soul never slighteth a communion with Christ, yet she never prizeth it at an higher rate, then in an hour of greatest trials, and temptations.*

Prop. 6. *Gods People will, (especially in times of trial, and great temptation) be prone to fall into sin, and error, to the scandal of their profession.*

Prop. 7. *Sin and Scandal, are the two great things which a gracious Soul fears.*

Prop. 8. *The Believing Soul, is of all other Souls the most beautiful in Christs Eyes.*

Prop. 9. *The Beauty of this Soul is not perfect*, it may in some things be ignorant.

Prop. 10. *The surest way for a Soul to get a perfect instruction in the things that concern its spiritual good, and to keep, and to enjoy communion*

munion with Christ, is to feed its self by the Tents of Christs Shepherds, and to live according to the examples and directions of his holy Servants, recorded in Holy Writ.

I begin with the first, of which I shall speak but briefly.

Prop. 1. *Jesus Christ is he whom the Soul loveth with a singular love.*

I put in the term *singular*, because (as I told you) the phrase imports it. Love is nothing else but the adhæsion, or cleaving of the Soul to an object, out of a goodness and suitableness which it hath discerned in it, with a complacency which the Soul taketh in it, which is such, as if the Soul wants it, it desires it; if it enjoyeth it, it is glad, and rejoyceth in it; which being first considered, it followeth; that look how many objects as there are, that have in them any goodness, or suitableness to our state, so many objects of our love there are in the world. And 2. That look *how much goodness and suitableness to us we apprehend in one object more than in another, so much we love one thing more than another*; or one person more than another. 2. There is also a love that floweth from *Union* and *Relation*, of which we are not able to give a perfect account; the *Parent* loves the *Child*, and the *Husband* loves the *Wife*, and the *Wife* the *Husband*, not alwaies out of Judgment. The Husband discerning in the Wife a suitableness to him, is not alwaies the cause of love: Nor is the Child's love to the Mother or Father alwaies rational, flowing from an apprehension of the suitableness of the Parent to it, but rather from an *impetus of nature*, an unaccountable complacency in those whom God hath made correlates, caused by the God of Nature, who hath made them one flesh; who so deliberately considereth this, will easily understand a double reason of the Believers Love to Christ.

1. The first is, *That Union which is betwixt the believing Soul, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, which is wrought by Faith; this produceth this second Union, which is that of *Love*. By *Faith* Christ is united to the Soul, and becometh a member of his body, and that is followed by this Union of *Love*: The Soul in the same hour wherein it is united by Faith to Christ, being taught of God to love the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a piece of its Regeneration, which continually followeth Justification, and is indeed coævous with it; so that as in the natural Union, the same day the man becomes a Father, or the Woman a Mother, there is a new Emanation of affection and love; the Man or Woman that before knew nothing

of

of the heart of a Parent, now begins to feel it, and in the moral Union betwixt the Husband and Wife, the same day that they are married to each other, there floweth a reciprocal Affection each to other, so as they then begin to know the *heart* of an *Husband* and a *Wife*, of which they knew little or nothing before: So it is upon the Spiritual Union; as the *God of Nature* influenceth the Souls of persons, whom he hath given one to another in natural and moral Relations, ordinarily for a reciprocal usefulness one to another: So the God of Grace influenceth the Soul put into a spiritual Relation to Christ: That the Believer upon his Union with Christ, doth find his heart cleaving to, and taking a complacency in the Lord Jesus Christ, and begins thus to know the heart of a *Believer*. And look as it is in the *moral Relation* betwixt the Wife and the Husband, though the Man may have heard such reports of the virtues and excellencies of the Woman before he hath married her, as hath inforced from him a complacency in her, yet this bears no proportion to that delight and complacency he taketh in her when she is once married to him. So, although a Soul upon the large discourses he hath heard of Christ, and of his love to Mankind, and what he hath done, and is ready to do for the Souls of men, may have some good thoughts of him, and some kind of complacency in his thoughts of him, yet there is a vast difference betwixt this, and that complacency which the Soul taketh in Christ, when it is once by Faith united to him, and amongst other habits of grace hath that of *Love to God* infused into his Soul, according to that, *Rom.* 5. 5. *The Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.* I know there is a Dispute raised by some, whether the natural man's love to God, differeth from the Believer's love to God *specifically*, or only *gradually*. I do not think that these spiritual habits fall under those *logical measures*; I am sure it is a love flowing quite from another cause. The natural man's love is no more than a natural Plant cultivated by reason; the other's is a *fruit of the Spirit*; so as they differ further than *gradually*; but whether we should call it *specifically*, or no, or want a *Logical term* to express the difference, I shall not think it worth my time to enquire.

2. A second Reason of the Believer's love, and so great and singular love to Christ, floweth from his *Experimental discerning of that admirable suitableness that is in Christ to his Soul, and the exceeding love which he hath shewn to him.* 1. *A Believer hath another kind of persuasion of the Love of Christ, and the excellency that is in him.*

him, than it is possible another should have. 1. *A persuasion flowing from Faith*; And 2. *Confirmed by Experience.* I say, first *flowing from Faith.* We know a thing by *Sense*, *Reason* or *Revelation*; the Excellency of Christ falleth not under the demonstration of Sense. *Reason indeed* working upon Principles of Revelation, I mean concluding from the Revelation of holy Writ, will shew even a natural man, much goodness, much excellency in Christ. But this *Knowledge* is very far from that *certainty* which *Faith* begetteth in the Soul, which is a *certainty* against which the Soul hath nothing to oppose ordinarily. *Faith* is an Evidence, and the strongest Evidence to the Soul of what it doth not see by the Eye of Sense, and seeth very imperfectly by the Eye of Reason. 2. *A Believer's Knowledge is confirmed by Experience*; as he hath heard from the Word of God; so he hath seen in the dispensations of God to his Soul. His Soul is sprinkled with the Blood of Christ; it was lost, it is now found: It lay under the guilt of sin, and through Christ's satisfaction it is acquitted. Though every Believer hath not a full persuasion of this, yet he hath a good *hope through grace*, and this cannot but kindle in his Soul a vehement flame of love to Christ. *Bless the Lord O my Soul* (saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 103. 3, 4. *and all that is within me bless his holy Name. Who forgiveth all thine iniquity, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction.* Nor hath he only some experience of the *suitableness of Christ* to his Soul, considered as a lost undone Soul; but he hath as firm a persuasion of Christ's readiness, as well as ability to supply all his wants, to hear all his prayers, to supply all its necessities, to bless it with all spiritual blessings; there is no Soul that lives in such a view as a Believing Soul, of its daily renewing sins, and so standing in need of daily repeated acts of pardon, daily renewings of spiritual strength, *&c.* It knows it is in the power of none to help it, but Christ alone, he alone sitteth at the right hand of God to make Intercession for the Soul; he is he alone who can be its Advocate at the Throne of Grace. It is the Spirit of Christ through which he must mortifie the deeds of the body, and who must strengthen it with might, to all the operations of the spiritual life. It is so natural to the Soul to love those that love it, that our Saviour saith, *if you do it, what reward have you?* The Soul thus apprehending Christ, its love towards him proceedeth in a natural order, and riseth higher as it knoweth that the love which he hath shewed it, and doth shew it, is the greatest love: For greater love than

than this can no man shew, than that a man should die for his friend; Christ hath died for it while it was an Enemy. *We* (saith the Apostle) *being Enemies to God, were reconciled unto him through the death of his Son.* The evil from which he delivered it, was the greatest evil. The reason why the natural man loveth not Christ, is because though he hath indeed heard much of Christ, and of his love to the Sons of men, yet he believeth not, or giveth only a faint and careless Assent unto what he readeth and heareth concerning him: He hath experienced nothing concerning the evil of sin, nor feeleth any need of pardon, and so cannot possibly discern or apprehend that goodness and excellency that is in Christ, nor that suitableness to a Soul's state, that a Believer is apprehensive of. And in regard the wants of the body are no way to be compared with the wants of the Soul, and the wants of the Soul cannot be supplied from any (except only Ministerially) but from Christ alone, the Soul must necessarily love Christ with a singular love, and all other things in subordination unto him, so as they must stand in no competition for the Soul's Affection with him, much less can such a Soul love any thing that offers it self in opposition to him. I might inlarge fuurther, in giving you Reasons for such a Soul's singular love to Christ; but I have touched upon this Argument before, and these are the two main Reasons of their singular love unto him. Their pourings out of their whole hearts, their intire Affections into his bosom. I shall only add a short Application of this Discourse.

Use.

Let us all by this try our selves, whether we be the *Spouse of Christ, yea or no*, that is, whether we be *true believers, yea, or no*, and true Members of the Church of Christ; by this we shall know it: If we can look up to Heaven, and say unto Christ, *O thou whom my Soul loveth.* There are many who go into the number of those who make up the *visible Church*, who are not the *Spouse* of Christ, or at least shall not be of the number of those hereafter, who shall make up the *Lambs Wife*, mentioned, *Rev.* 21. 9. They are not that Spouse mentioned, *Rev.* 19. 7. *To whom it is granted that she shall be arrayed in fine linnen, clean and white*, or of those *blessed ones, who shall be called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.* The contract betwixt the Soul and Christ is made in *secret.* In that *contract* (as in others) Christ consents to receive the Soul, and the Soul consenteth to receive Christ, The former of these indeed is sufficiently in the general declared in the more general call, and invitation of the Gospel, wherein Christ calleth to all to whom the Gospel is preached, to

come unto him, promising that he will *receive them*, and that he will *by no means cast them away*, yet he hath not there spoken this to any particular person by name, only in *general*, to all those who are weary, and heavy laden, and who come unto him, and the Soul is often at a loss, in determining concerning the truth of its own acts, in coming to, and receiving of Christ tendred in the Gospel. On the other side the presumptuous man is like the *foolish young man* in the world, that thinks that every young woman who *smileth on him*, or speaketh kindly to him, will presently take him for her Husband, and concludeth good to himself from every *smile* of providence, but to satisfy the true Christian, and to convince others of their folly, let every Soul know, that there is no Soul can take any comfort of this nature, but that Soul only that can truly say unto Christ, *O thou whom my Soul loveth*, and certainly would men, and women be true to themselves, they might from hence determine their Spiritual state. But yet, as there is a common affection, which a woman may have for many men, none of which she intendeth to make her Husband, and she may do many common acts of kindness for them, so there is a *common love*, which a man may have for Christ, and many common actions which they may do in his service; the question therefore is, how a man or woman may know, whether he or she may with confidence look up to Heaven, and say, *O thou whom my Soul loveth*? Let me add a word or two upon this argument here, though I have before spoken much to it.

1. I desire you to observe in the first place, that the Spouse speaketh *here in the singular number*, *O thou whom my Soul loveth*, so must every Soul do that loveth Christ in truth; a divided Soul is always *funny*. That Soul which hath *any* thing in Heaven or Earth to be compared with Christ, doth not love him. It is true that love is a *diffusive affection*, and may respect several objects, but note these two things.

1. These objects must be only *diverse*, not contrary. *Contraries* naturally expel one another, there is nothing but *sin* and *lust* that is contrary to Christ, you cannot (saith our Saviour) *love God & Mammon*, he that saith to any lust, *O thou whom my Soul loveth*, cannot in truth say so unto Christ. How many in the world by their fondness upon their lusts, shew their want of love to Christ?

2. *Conjugal love* admitteth neither *parity*, nor *priority*. The Wife that loveth her *Husband* as she ought to love him, must neither love any other before him, or better then other, not yet in a pro-

proportion equal with him; she must love him before, and above all things. Our Saviour hath determined this in saying, *He that loveth Father or Mother, or Brother, or Sister more then me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth Son or Daughter more then me, is not worthy of me.*

2. *Soul-love* will be known also by *Soul-longings.* Love teacheth the Soul to long after, 1. *Union with the object beloved.* 2. *A sense of reciprocal love.* 3. *Communion with the object beloved.* If thy Soul loveth the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be seen in thy *longings after him* in the hour of his apprehended absence, or after such degrees of his presence, as thou hast not yet attained, and after a sense of his reciprocal love; the Soul that truly loves, is impatient till it discerneth itself mutually beloved, it will also long after *communion with Christ*; you read *Davids* temper as to this, *Psal.* 84. 1, 2, 3. *Psal.* 42. 1. *Psal.* 63. 1. Alas how few are there whose pulses beat with any strength for God?

3. Love (thirdly) is discovered by a *complacency, delight, & satisfaction,* in the *presence* of the object beloved, according to the degree of its presence. As it longeth for its object when absent; so it *rejoyceth* and *melts* in the embraces of it when present. What satisfaction hath thy Soul in an Ordinance, or Duty, in which thou hast seen the *power & glory of God,* the presence of Christ in his Ordinance?

4. Love again is seen by the *Soul's sorrow for a departed Christ.* The *loving Wife* weepeth when she for any time parteth with her Husband, and is solitary when he is gone. *Mary's* love to Christ was discerned by her weeping, because she knew not where they had laid him. And the *Jews* cryed out, when they saw Christ *weeping* over the grave of *Lazarus*; *Behold how he loved him!* The dispensations of Christ to the Soul sometimes are very dark; he seems to be gone, and as it were buried out of the Soul's sight, how beateth thy heart at such a time? art thou afflicted? or art thou not?

5. If thy Soul loveth the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be seen by thy *anger at any thing, whether in, or from thy self, or others, which grieveth or offendeth him.* Love (to its power) will suffer no injury to the Beloved The Wife will not her self abuse her Husband, nor (to her power) will she suffer any other; if unwarily, ignorantly, or in a passion at any time she hath done it, she is angry at her self for it; and if others do it, she is ready to seek a revenge upon them. *What indignation! what revenge!* (saith the Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.) is produced by godly sorrow, which is the effect of love,

6. If thy Soul loveth Christ, *thou wilt reveal all the Secrets of thy Soul to him*; he shall know all thy griefs, all thy desires and wants; thou wilt be much in *prayer*, much in *secret prayer*. *Dalilah* charged *Sampson* for want of love to her, because he had concealed his secrets from her. Christ (on the contrary) justifieth his love to his Disciples, *Joh.* 15. 15. by his *telling them all he had heard of his Father*.

7. If Christ be he *whom the Soul loves, the Soul will be much in the meditation of him*. Whatsoever is the object of our Love, is much in our thoughts. *O how I love thy Law* (saith *David*,) *Psal.* 119. 97, 99. *it is my meditation night and day*. What room in thy thoughts hath Christ, and the things of Christ?

8. *The Soul that is full of love, is like the Fountain which is full, and must overflow*. If we love any persons, we are often *talking of them*, upon all occasions *talking for them*, and very often (as we can get opportunities) *talking with them*. What are thy discourses of Christ to others? How dost thou use thy Tongue in *discoursing for Christ, when there is need*? What discourses hast thou *with Christ in prayer*?

9. Soul-love is like the *Sun*, that cannot shine upon the Glass of the house, but its refracted Beams will pierce thorow, and shew themselves upon the *walls*, the floor, the pavements. A love to Christ will look thorow him, and shew it self upon every thing that hath relation to him, his People, his Ministers, his Word and Ordinances, *Psal.* 16. 2, 3. *O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints that are in the Earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight*.

10. And lastly; *If you love Christ with your Souls, you will keep his Commandments*; yea if it be to *sacrifice an Isaac*, to pluck out a *right Eye*, or cut off a *right Hand*: This is our Saviour's mark, *Joh.* 14. 15. *Obedience* is the first and most genuine fruit of Love; and if it be such as shall speak a true Love in the Soul to Christ, it must be 1. *Internal*, as well as external. 2. *Universal*, not partial. 3. *Constant*, and not only for a fit.

But of these things I have spoken before, and therefore shall not inlarge, &c.

Ser-

Sermon XLII.

Canticles 1. 7.

Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at Noon.

I have done with the firſt Propoſition I obſerved from theſe Words from the compellation (*O thou whom my Soul loveth*) viz. *That Chriſt is he, and the only he whom the believing Soul loveth*; there was a 2d which I alſo obſerved from that; *viz. That as there is a time when ſuch a Soul will conceal its Love to Chriſt, and will not be brought to own its Love to him: So there is a time when it will own and acknowledge it.* This now would lead me to a diſcourſe of thoſe times, when a believer is free to own, and acknowledge its grace, particularly, its love to Chriſt; And thoſe times when it findeth a difficulty and will not be brought to do it. But I remember, I handled that point, when I diſcourſed the forgoing words *I am black but comely.* I ſhall therefore here paſs it over, *and* come to the matter of the petition or thing wherein ſhe deſireth to be inſtructed. viz. *Where he feds* [his flock;] Where *he made his flocks to reſt at Noon.* In the explication of the terms of the Text. I conſidered the *Noon* time,

1. As the time when Shepherds having driven their flocks into ſome ſhady places to lye down, and reſt, were themſelves moſt at leiſure and one might have the moſt private, free, and full communion with them with the leaſt interruptions. At other times of the day, till night again comes, the Shepherd muſt have a conſtant Eye upon his flock. According to which ſenſe, the phraſe is expreſſive of believing Souls deſires of all occaſions, and opportunities, when it may have the moſt private, free, and full communion with Chriſt, with the leaſt interruptions.

2. Secondly, As the time, *when* the *Sun ſhines out hotteſt*; So it may

may be understood of the *Churches Noon*, or the Believers *Noon*. When they were most *scorched with Trials, and Persecutions*. So there are 3 Propositions which I before observed. The first of which I shall begin with.

Prop. *That a believing Soul is very covetous of such occasions and opportunities, when it may injoy the most private, free, and full communion with Christ, with the least interruptions.*

Whiles the Shepherd is driving his flock to their pastures he is in motion, one may exchange some few words with him, but he cannot have much serious discourse with him, when he cometh to his feeding place, still his Eye must be after his flock, which in their feeding may be prone to straggle, but at Noon, when his flocks are in the shadow, that is the faireſt opportunity of converse with the Shepherd. It is true it is the infirmity of our humane natures, that we cannot at the same time duly attend two different things, God is not under the Law of it, God cannot be so taken up with one business of providence, as to neglect another because of it. But while Christ is set out to us under imperfect, and infirm comparisons, he is set out as one compassed about with our infirmities. And certain it is that our communion with him in this life, admitteth of many interruptions on our part, and there are times, and places wherein a good Christian may and doth injoy a more perfect, free, and full communion with his God, then he doth, or can do, at other times and places.

The Spouse here desireth to know, the times, places, and opportunities of most free, full and perfect communion with God, and this I say is the object of every believing Souls desire.

As to *times* of this nature they are easily discerned, by considering what those things are which most interrupt and hinder our communion with God: those are either, 1. *Worldly cares, businesses* and *distractions*: or 2. *Temptations, whether from the stirrings of lusts* in our own heart (for every man saith *James is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed.*) Or from his *Grand adversary the Devil.* So that times of freeſt communion with God, are times, when we are likely to be most free from the incumbrances of the World, or the *molestations of our own lusts, or Satans Suggestions.* As to the two latter, there are indeed no times as to which which we can promise

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our selves an abſolute immunity. As to the former there are two times. The *morning* or *the night ſeaſon*. 2. *The Sabbath day*.

1. *The morning* or *night ſeaſon*. That is a time for reſt, and when the greateſt part of the World are at their natural reſt. hence you ſhall obſerve that the Servants of God have often made choice of theſe times for their more private and free communion with God. *Pſal.* 5. 3. *My voice ſhalt thou hear in the morning, in the morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee, and will look up*, Pſal. 59. 16. *I will ſing aloud of thy mercy in the morning* Pſal. 63. 1. *O God thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee*, v. 6. When I *remember thee on my bed, and meditate on the in the night watches*. Times of leaſt buſineſs, in the World and greateſt ſilence, from the noiſes & buſineſſes of the World, are the times for freeſt communion with God, not that God is not as ready to hear our Prayers, and to communicate himſelf at other times, but becauſe the Souls of Gods People, are not ſo free in themſelves, for whereas the life of our communion with God lyeth in the *attention* of *our thoughts*, and *fervency of our Spirits*. And the latter of theſe hath alſo a great dependence on the former, it is impoſſible for us to keep our thoughts ſo intent upon our duty, when the noiſes, and buſineſſes of the World diſtract us, as when we have nothing of that nature from the World to diſturb or divert us.

2. The *Sabbath day* is likewiſe ſuch another time, and ſo are other times which we have voluntarily ſet apart for the Solemn ſeeking of God, but the former eſpecially. For tho the Law of the Lord for the *Sanctification* of *the Sabbath*, hath not ſuch an influence upon the World, as were highly to be deſired, yet in the places (eſpecially) where we live, it hath ſome influence ſo that the moſt of men and women ceaſe from all ſervile labour and there is a great ſilence in the World that day in compariſon of other days: and that law taketh a great hold upon the hearts of all ſuch as truly fear God, ſo as none of them durſt ingage themſelves in worldly buſineſſes as on other dayes: and tho this be not the caſe as to ſuch ſolemn days as Chriſtians ſet apart for religious duties, yet we having laid our ſelves under a *private law*, tho the time at firſt was our own, and we needed not to have dedicated it to the Lord, yet having done it, we think our ſelves juſtly to be more ingaged, and concerned to lay the World out of our ſight and thoughts, and

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and this doubtless much commendeth the practice of Christians in setting some times of this nature apart for the solemn service of God.

As to *places* under the Gospel we have no such place as the *Temple at Hierusalem*, none to which any such *promise* is made, our *Rule* is, *Every where to Worship the Father: Every where to lift up pure hands.* But yet though there be no particular place, concerning which we have a command, more then another, in it to make our addresses to God, nor any to which any promise is made, nor concerning which it can be said God hath in it more Manifested himself to People seeking him, yet there are two sort of places in which we have more advantage then in others, for a communion with God: 1. *Places of Solitude*, 2. *Places where* 2 *or* 3 *meet together* or a greater number of Gods People so meet to pray, or in any manner to Worship God.

1. The first give us advantage by freeing us from the *noises*, *business* and *distractions of the World*; hence you read of *Isaac*'s going into the field, for meditation, and our Saviour's going so often up to a mountain for Prayer, *Mar.* 6.46. *Matth.* 14.23.

2. The second gives us advantage, as *from the promise of God made to the assemblies* of his People, so from the *influence* that the *Affections of pious Souls in holy duties have, one upon* another, of which it is an hard thing to give an account, but it is no more then I believe any good Christian will find upon his or her experience, that their hearts are otherwise affected, when they are in a society of serious Christians praying to God, or performing any acts of Worship, then when they are alone. Hence it is that you find serious Christians, so covetous of opportunities to withdraw into their closets, or when they may join with other serious and conscientious Christians in more publick Worship.

If any shall (for the further explication of this notion) ask me, from whence a more full, free, and uninterrupted communion with God is to be adjudged and determined, I answer shortly, I have before told you, That all *communion* speaks a mutual or *reciprocal communication* of two or more each to other. God communicateth himself to the Soul in his influences of grace, the Soul communicateth it self to God, in the *acts* and *exercises* of its gracious habits, so as the *fulness*, *freedom* and more near

commu-

communion with God is to be judged from several things.

1. First *from the attention of the Souls thoughts in the duty.* A Soul hath more or less communion with God in a duty, as his thoughts more or less deviate and wander from the thing he is about. When there is a meer bodily service performed either by the lips, or knee, or Eye, the duty is but a mere *formality*, the Soul hath no communion with God in it, in Praying the man doth not Pray, nor in hearing hear, nor in singing sing. As to this the best of Gods People must cry, God be merciful to us sinners, so that the degree of perfection attainable in this life as to this thing is but comparative, some may have more of this attention then others, or more at one time then at another, but none is perfect in this thing. Only the pious Soul as in other things, so in this thing, is striving after perfection, pressing forward towards the mark, and daily humbling himself for his imperfection, and flying to Christs intercession and advocation, and exercising faith on his more perfect righteousness.

A second thing wherein a fuller communion with God (on the Souls part) lyeth, is, *fervency of Spirit*, this chiefly respecteth the duties of *Prayer*, and *Praise*. The *effectual Prayer* must be *fervent*, *Jam.* 5. 19. *Prayer* is oft times in Scripture expressed under the notion of *crying*, *wrestling with God*, pouring out of the heart before the Lord, *Psal.* 142. 2. *Psal.* 62. 8. *David* calleth this a *pressing hard after God*, *Psal.* 63. 8. some think it is a metaphor from *hounds* pursuing their game in view.

3. A third thing is a *Freedom of Spirit*. This is (as I take it) that which *David* calls *largeness of heart*, *Psal.* 119. v. 32. *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.* There is no good man but findeth his heart more free to duty, and in duty at one time then at another; there is a *straitness of heart* which at some times is the great grievance, and incumbrance of pious Souls, it is caused sometimes from immoderate sorrow, sometimes from *fear* sometimes from one cause, sometimes from another, but what ever the cause be, it certainly abates the Souls communion with God, at least its communications of it self to God. And by consequence, a freedom of Spirit, a readiness of heart to duty, with a liberty not of tongue onely but of Spirit also (for without the latter, the former

is but hypocrisy) advantageth, and promoveth the Souls communion with God.

4. A fourth thing which maketh the Souls communion with God more full is, *An ability more strongly to exercise its faith* upon God without doubting; whether it be in a stronger *adherence* or more *firm perswasion.*

5. On Gods part the Souls communion is more full, *when it receiveth from God more influences of grace* testifying his acceptance of the Souls addresses unto him, or filling it with the sensible manifestations of his love, or inabling it more fully to communicate it self unto God, that it can be more attent in its thoughts, more fervent in Spirit, more free to, and in its performances, or exercise its faith more powerfully and strongly. This I conceive to be enough to have spoken in the explication of the Proposition, hinting you both wherein this more full, and free communion with God, is discernable, and also what those times or places are where, and when it may most ordinarily, and probably be obtained, which I conceive is the thing which the Spouse in the text expresseth her desire towards, and which she begs that her beloved would instruct her as to.

That this is the desire of every good Christian, appeareth,

1. From *its deprecation of those things* which *would hinder it, and avoiding them so far as it can.* Those things that hinder it are, 1. *Intestine lusts and motions to sin,* Vanity of thoughts, *&c.* 2. *Diabolical Suggestions.* Now there are no two things which the pious Soul more deprecateth then these two: *Worldly distractions.* Observe *David* how he bewailed his *dwelling in Meshek*; And *having his habitation in the tents of Kedar* and how bitterly in three several *Psalms* he bewails his being banished from *Hierusalem*, *Psalm* 42. *Psal.* 84. *Psal.* 63. So *Psal.* 120. *v.* 5. How sadly doth St. *Paul* bewail his *body of death Rom.* 7. 24.

2. *From its thirstings after times, and opportunities of communion with God*; of which also you have instances in all the *Psalms* before mentioned, *Psal.* 86. 11. He prays for an *heart united to fear the Lords name, Psal.* 86. 11. And rejoiceth in a *fixed heart, Psal.* 57. 7. *Psal.* 108. *v.* 1.

Reason. Nor indeed can it possibly be otherwise as will appear to any Soul that understandeth what communion with God is.

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That which is the object of any rational Souls desire, must come under the notion of good, and so appear, and the more goodness, or suitableness to a Souls necessities is in any object, and appears to the Soul, the stronger must be the Souls motions to, and towards it. Now there is nothing in the World, can possibly appear to a pious Soul to have that degree of goodness in it, that an *Union* and *communion with God hath*, they being things suited to the Souls highest wants. Our communion with God, is the great testimony of our union with him, and that Soul that hath no evidence of a communion with God, will find it self at as great a loss to evidence its union with him. Besides, good is generally valued, and adjudged, either by *profit* or *pleasure*. The pious Soul knoweth, that the more full, or free, and less interrupted its communion with God is, the more *sweet*, and *pleasant it is*; duties are more our tasks, and burdens, then our delight and pleasure, when the Soul hath but a broken interrupted, and distracted communion with him. And as to *profit* nothing can be more considerable to the Soul, considering that the peace of the Soul, and the increase of its grace, are both much advantaged by it. *David* cryeth out, *Psal.* 73. *v.* 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee*. The desire of God upon Earth (mentioned by the *Psalmist*) must be a desire of fellowship, and communion with God, which being in it self desirable, the more the Soul hath of it, the more full, and free, and less interrupted that communion is, the more still it must be the object of every pious Souls desire.

This (in the first place) will shew us a certain difference, betwixt the *Child* of *God*, and an *hypocrite*. The profane man despiseth communion with God, and looks upon all discourses concerning *union* and *communion with Christ* as mere canting. The hypocrite pretends to something of communion with God, but any slight degrees of it, any acts by which he can but fancy he hath any such communion, serve his turn, and satisfy him. A formal hypocrite possibly cannot stop the mouth of his natural conscience, nor save his reputation with the World without the performance of some duties, which God hath instituted, wherein the People of God have a communion with God, he must sometimes pray, and hear a Sermon, but whether his heart be united to God in *Prayer*, whether he attends to the Words of the Use 1.

Prayer, whether he finds any fervency of Spirit or any freedom of Spirit to, or in the duty, whether his Soul performeth it with any exercise of faith in God; these are things he looks not after, neither are they the objects of his desires or indeavours.

Use 2. Hence therefore conscientious Christians may take some *just* measures of themselves. A Christian indeed is not to be judged from his praying or hearing, but from his hungring and thirsting after a communion with God in the duties he performeth unto him and after such a communion with God, as I have been describing unto you; and if there be such desires in your Souls, they will be evidenced.

1. *By the trouble of your Souls when you find you come short of it.* Desire (not obtained) as well as hope deferred, will make the heart sick, no true Christian but at some times, will find his *thoughts* more *wandring*, his *Affections* more *cold*, his *Spirit* more *straitned*, his Faith more languid; to find this and not to be concerned for it, or troubled at it, is a very ill evidence against the Soul, that it hath no such desires as I have been discoursing of.

2. Secondly, Such *desires will be attended with indeavours to avoid whatsoever may hinder such a communion with God.* Real desires are always attended with proportionable indeavours. He that desires a more free, and full communion with his friend, will go out of a croud of company, where he knows he cannot injoy it. He that desires such a communion with Christ will find some time to get out of the crouds of Worldly business and company, where he knows he cannot have it.

3. And Lastly, The truth of such desires will be evidenced by the use of all probable means that may conduce to it.

Use 3. He vainly pretends to desire a thing who will use no means within his reach, and power to obtain it. And that brings me in the last place to a Word of exhortation to the use of such means. For though it must be by an influence, a great influence of grace, that any Soul comes up to this, yet that is to be obtained by the use of due means on our part.

I shall briefly hint some probable means of this nature.

1. *Make Religion as much your business as you can.* I know it cannot be all our business while we are in the world. But the more it is our business the more our communion with God will be.

be. When a Boy is first bound Apprentice, he knoweth not how to keep his mind to his business, it is much running after his idle diversions and recreations, but when he hath once been habituated to his work, by degrees he grows more serious, and fixed. So will the Soul as to its great business of communion with God.

2. *Prepare your hearts to seek the Lord*, by prayer, by sequestring your selves sometime from your secular concerns. There lyes much in this, for want of it, we are much accessary to our own distractions; and that interrupted broken communion with God, of which we complain.

3. *Use your indeavours to lift up your hearts to God in duties, and to keep off such things as would hinder it.* Frown upon your hinderances. If a man frowns upon one that would come to disturb him in any serious discourse with his friend, he must be very impudent that should continue such interruptions, or repeat them.

4. Lastly. *Beg of God to make up what thou canst not do.*

Hitherto I have only discoursed a notion of my own as to the Sense of my Text. I told you that the generality of Interpreters take notice of the *Noon* as the hottest time of the day, when the Sun emits its most direct beams, & so by it understand a time of *Affliction* and *trial*, for which interpretation, they have that of our Saviour *Matth.* 13. 6. 21. This will afford us two notions, the one more implyed, the other more plainly expressed. I shall speak something onely to the first of them at this time.

Prop. *That Christ hath feeding, and resting places, and shades, wherewith, and wherein to refresh his Saints in the most scorching times of trial and affliction.*

I shall onely open the Proposition by shewing you *what these shades*, these *feeding & resting places are*, & then shortly apply my discourse. As to the first I shall instance only in three particulars. *David* in his 23 *Psal.* maketh use of this very *Metaphor*, *The Lord* (saith he) *is my Shepherd, v. 2. He maketh me to lye down in green pastures, he leadeth me besides the still Waters.* It is the work of a Shepherd, to find out green pastures for his flock in the day time and a secure fold for them at night, yea and a fitting shadow for them at noon. Christ doth so for his *little flock* to whom it's his his Fathers and his will to give a Kingdom. There shall be no

want,

want of those that fear him. In the day time of their lives, he feeds, and protects them by his providence, he nourisheth them by his ordinances, and daily influences of grace. In the night of death, he folds their Bodies in the grave, their Souls in *Abrahams bosom*; It is the work of a Shepherd, to provide and look out pasture for his sheep when that ordinary pasture is burnt up like a wilderness; It is our great Shepherds work, to provide feeding, and resting places, when either publick trials, afflictions, and persecutions debar them of their ordinary subsistence upon common providence, or ordinary and more publick dispensations of publick ordinances, and institutions, the common food of their Souls. But you will say to me, what are these *shadows from the heat*, these *feeding*, and *resting* places which Christ hath provided, wherein to feed and rest his flock at such a Noon?

1. First *he feedeth them upon the promises, either more general, or more specially suited to their particular trials. Jeremiah* saith, *Jer.* 15. 16. *I found thy words and did eat them and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Jeremy* possibly there speaketh of the word of *Prophecy* which was as welcome to him as his meat. But what was the word of Prophecy but the revelation of the will of God to him, which when it was foretelling some judgment to come upon the People is more ordinarily called, *The Burden of the Lord?* The Believing Soul also in the Noon time of his Affliction and tryal, finds the word of the Lord, this he digesteth by faith, and they become the joy and rejoycing of his heart. *By these things men live* (said *Hezekiah*) some understand his affliction: Others the *promises of God* made to him in the day of his Affliction. The carnal heart understands not this food, it is to him all one with feeding upon the air. The promises are onely yea and *Amen* in *Christ*; they are as shew bread of which none but the *Royal Priest-hood* can eat, when the Child of God hath nothing else to eat, he will yet feed upon a promise. *I had perisht* (saith *David*) *in my affliction if thy word had not been my delight, Psal.* 119. *v.* 92. *Latimer* is said to have made his last meal upon that promise, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *Faithful is God, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able.* It is also reported of one Mr. *Midgely* a Minister in *Yorkshire*, that being under horrid temptations to destroy himself, and going once to the water side with design to do it, carrying in his pocket

ket the *New Testament*; he paused a while to read a little and happily fell upon that text, *Mat.* 1. 28. 29. *Come unto me all you that are weary, and heavy laden and I will ease you*; upon the reading of which he said to himself (or to God rather) *sayest thou so?* I *will not then drown my self yet*. The large field of the promises, is one of those green pastures; Where Christ at Noon feedeth his flock, and maketh them to rest. It is a feeding place which is at all times green, the promises contain the *Sure mercies* of God. He that liveth upon meer Sensible enjoyments, feedeth but upon Grass and Flowers. The Grass will wither, and Flowers will fade. But *the word of the Lord abideth for Ever*, and there are some promises or others, which sute the Soul in all its states, and circumstances of Tryal and affliction.

2. Secondly, Christ sometimes feeds his flock at noon, upon *Special Providences*. And these are also of several sorts, either of *Protection from the Evil*, or *Sustentation in, and under trouble or deliverances out of trouble* sometimes when thousands, and ten thousands fall on their right, and left hand. The Plague shall not come nigh their dwellings, according to the promise, *Psal.* 91. *v.* 7. In a time of *famine*, Corn shall be fetched out of *Egypt* for *Jacobs* Family, the Prophet shall be fed by a raven, or the multiplying of the little meal in the widows barrel, and the little Oyl in the cruse. Sometimes they shall by some miraculous, or at least inexpected wales, and means be delivered out of trouble, so were the three Children in the *fiery furnace*; *Daniel*, in the den of Lions; of these there are multitudes of instances in Ecclesiastical History.

3. Thirdly, He sometimes feeds his People by *Special influences*, either of *strengthening* or *comforting grace*. In the multitude of my perplexing thoughts (saith *David*) *thy comforts delight my Soul*, *Psal.* 34. *v.* 19. *As the sufferings of Christ abound in us*, (saith the Apostle) *so our consolations abound by Christ*, 2 *Corinth.* 1. 5. *He will* (saith *Job*) *put strength into me*. Hence the Servants of God are inabled to rejoyce in tribulation; & under sicknesses, have professed that they were never better, and in great trials have rejoiced with a joy unspeakable; Rejoycing in tribulation floweth not from the *Tribulation*. For no affliction is joyous, but grievous, but from the influences of God upon the Soul in, and under its tribulation. Some one or other of these wales, and means Christ feedeth his flock in a time of Trial, and maketh them to rest in the Noon time of

Trials

Trials, and afflictions. I proceed to the application of this discourse.

Use 1. *This* in the first place *commendeth the love of Christ to his little flock.* They say the Devil leaves the Witch when she is once in Gaol, or upon trial for her life, how true that is I cannot tell; but certain it is that his Servants have no great help from him in an hour of straits, and adversity; & this indeed speaks no love, which never so much or so clearly shineth as through a Cloud of sad Providences. *Solomon* tells us that a friend is *made for an hour of adversity.* But herein is the Love of Christ manifested to those that have relation to him, *my Soul* (saith *Mary*, *Luk.* 1. 4647.) *doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.* Christ regardeth the low estate of his People, he leaveth them not when they are in distress, *Isaiah* 43. 1, 2. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee, when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt neither shall the flame kindle upon thee: For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel thy Saviour.* This lets us see the wonderful difference betwixt the state and condition of believers, and unbelievers. The world hath no places where to make their flocks to *rest at Noon.* The Devil takes no care for his flock at such a time. Other men may seem to do well enough so long as they have rest and ease, and prosperity. But what will they do in the day of their visitation? God takes another care for his People; when *David* can incourage himself in nothing else, he can *incourage himself in his God. When the Fig-tree doth not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vine, when the fields yield no meat, and the flock are cut off from the fold, and there is no herd in the stall, yet* even *then they can rejoyce in the Lord and be glad in the God of their Salvation,* Habak. 3. 17, 18, 19. *Under his shades we shall live* (saith the Afflicted Church, *Lam.* 4. 20. I sate under his *shadow with great delight*, saith the Spouse, *Cant.* 2. 3. There are many promises which God hath made to his People to be their *hiding place*, their *rock*, their *Covert*, their *shadow* from the *storm*, and *from the tempest.* To which I refer you.

Use 2. In the next place; *What cause of rejoycing and lifting up of the head is here to the People of God, whether such as lie under the present*

sent pressures of Tryals or Afflictions, or such as have these storms in prospect, though they be not already fallen upon them. Is the noon of Tryals and Afflictions come upon any of you? Hath the Lord taken away those gourds which heretofore were a shade to you, your health, friends, estate, your outward comforts, of what kind soever? yet be of good cheer, God is only changing your Souls Pastures: Hitherto you have lived more immediately upon the creature, you shall only now live more immediately upon God; hitherto you have lived by sight, God is now calling you to live by Faith; hitherto your great Shepherd hath fed you in the fields of sensible comforts and enjoyments, things that are seen, he is now calling you to live upon things that are invisible, but every way as sufficient for the support and sustenance of the Soul; he that hath fed thee in the morning, will not leave thee at noon time, *Psal.* 37. *v.* 3. *Trust in the Lord, and do good, and so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed. David* saith, *He never saw the righteous forsaken.* The Believer shall be fed, either with that bread which the world knoweth, and calleth so, or with that bread which the world knoweth not of. There is a revolution of time, a vicissitude of Providences, but there is no change of the Word and Promises of God. *Verily they shall be fed.* There shall be no want to those that fear the Lord. A *noon* may come, but Christ hath a *shadow*, a *feeding*, a resting place for his *flocks at noon.* That God who hath kept thee in health, will also keep thee in sickness. He that hath hitherto kept thee from the malice of a most malicious world, will keep thee under the pressures of their malice: Only take care to *Trust in the Lord, and to do good.* Is not this thy case? Hast thou the storm only in prospect, but it is not yet fallen upon thee; and art thou only tormented with the fears of what is likely to come upon thee? oft-times slavish fear proves a great evil, and an evil in prospect, is greater than when it is fallen upon a person. Let this incourage you to hear that Christ hath shades for his People at noon. God hath said, *I will never leave you nor forsake you.* Let me only commend one Promise to you; it is made to the Church, and to every Believer as a Member of it; it is that *Isa.* 4. 5, 6. *And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount* Zion, *and upon her Assemblies a cloud, and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory shall be a defence, and there shall be a Tabernacle in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from Storm and from Rain.*

Use 3. I will shut up this Discourse with a word or two of Exhortation.

First; To such as are yet *none of the Inhabitants of Mount* Zion: None of those, I mean, who are the true Members of the Church of Christ: Those who have no title, or are able to make out no title to the dwelling-places upon Mount *Zion*, or any of them; what a motive should this be to all such to indeavour what in them lieth, to get into Christ's little Flock. A *noon* must come. Possibly it is now morning with you, and you are more careless; but man is born to trouble, and it is as natural to humane nature, as it is for sparks to fly upward, as *Job* tells us. The Children of God in respect to the world's hatred, are more exposed to others; but there is none who liveth and shall not see death; none that lives but must look to be in deaths often, of one nature or another. It is certainly the highest prudence to be prepared for all Assayes. Thou hast no way for this but to get an interest in Christ. Whilst thou art an *Egyptian*, thou canst not look for the Priviledges of one that is an Inhabitant in *Goshen*. Doest thou ask me how can this be? How should I who am a Goat be transformed into a Sheep? Our Saviour answers thee, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God*; he can be none of that little Flock to whom it is God's will to give that Kingdom *Regeneration*, a new Birth, from the holy Spirit, can only make this *Spiritual Metamorphosis*. Thy work in order to it, lyeth only in some external actions, such as restraining what thou canst from sin, waiting upon God in Ordinances, calling upon God in Prayer, not resisting the motions of his holy Spirit.

2d *Branch*. Secondly; This Discourse ought to quicken such as are of the Flock of Christ in all their *Noons* of Affliction and Trial, to betake themselves to Christ's shades, to the places where Christ useth to feed, and to make his Flocks to rest at Noon. What those shades are, I have shewed you; our work is to betake our selves unto them. It is natural to us when we are pursued to look for a covert, for some refuge or shelter, where we may hide our selves till the storm be passed over, and to flee to such places where we think that we may be secure. There is no true shelter but in Christ's shades. Let us then inquire what is the duty of a good Christian in an evil day, that he may bring his Soul to a rest and quiet.

1. The first and great thing is, to look out our Evidences, *to make out our title to, and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ*. We must intitle our selves to the great Shepherd of our Souls, as our *Shepherd*, before

before we can expect that he should in a scorching time make us to lie down in green Pastures, and lead us besides the still waters, and encourage our selves as *David*, Psal. 23. 4. *Though I walk through the shadow of death, I shall fear none evill, for thou art with me; thy Rod and thy Staff comfort me.*

2. That done, a Christian's next work is, to *look out the Promises which God hath made, either such as are more general*, and respect his People under any Trial, or such *as are more special*, and relate to the People of God under such particular pressures of Affliction that they lie under. The Book of holy Scriptures is a great Store-house, there is scarce any condition of Christians to which some Promises are not suited. It is of great use for a Christian to know, and understand, and be acquainted with the Promises: They are as the Jointure to the Wife, all that she hath to live upon; only with this difference, the Woman liveth not upon the Jointure which her earthly Husband hath made her, till he be dead. Christ died once, he dieth no more, but ever lives; but the Promises are what the Soul liveth upon, when God seems as dead, withdrawing himself from the support and protection of his People. A good Christian ought not therefore to be a stranger to them.

3. It is the duty of a Christian to *betake himself to these shades*; to eye the Promises, to commit himself unto them, to hope in them; these are acts and exercises of Faith. *Come my People* (saith God by his Prophet *Isaiah*,) *Enter into the Chambers, and hide thy self for a little time, till the indignation be overpast.* Our coming is by Faith, committing our selves unto God, and trusting in him, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls unto him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* Christ is the primary object of our Faith, the Promises are the proximate objects. In such a time therefore let every good Christian call the Promises to his mind, whet them upon his Soul, offer his Soul to them, call upon it to trust in them.

4. It is the duty of a Christian at such a time to *wait upon God with patience.* God ought to be trusted in regard of his Truth and Faithfulness, his Power and Goodness. He ought to be *waited upon* in regard of his Majesty, and Greatness, and Wisdom. The Promises are oft-times made in general, for help, deliverance, strength, and the like, without specifying the particular way and method which God will use, and without limitations of time; *He that believeth maketh not hast.*

5. There must be a *close walking with God, though we be sore broken in the place of Dragons, and covered with the shadow of death, yet we must not forget the Name of our God; our heart must not turn back from him; we must not deal falsly in our Covenant with him, nor suffer our steps to decline from his way*, Psal. 44. The Promise, *Psal.* 37. 4. that we *shall dwell in the Land, and be certainly fed*, is prefaced with a Precept, *to trust in the Lord, and to do good.* And the advice of the Apostle *Peter is to commit our Souls in well doing unto God, as to a faithful Creator.*

6. Lastly, *Prayer* must be added, the *promises* are Gods bonds, by which he hath made himself a Debtor to his Creature. Prayer is an action of ours, by which we put these bonds in suit.

Sermon XLIII.

Cant. 1. 7.

Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at Noon; for why should I be like one of them that turneth aside by the flocks of thy Companions.

I Am still upon the Spouses third Petition to her Beloved. *Tell me (O thou whom my Soul loveth) where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.* Methinks I could say with *Peter*, when he was with his Master upon the Mount of Transfiguration: *It is good for us to be here*; let us build here two *Tabernacles*, one for the *Spouse*, another for her *Beloved.* What she would have in this Petition clouded with Metaphors, I have more fully before opened, either a more full *communion with Christ, most free from interruptions*: Or *his more special influence upon her in her hours of affliction, and persecution.* I have spake something already to it in both these senses. I have but one thing to add, before I come to the words, which are the reason of her Petition, that is from the

form

form of the words, considered as a prayer, so expressive both of her *wants*, and *desires n supply*. The Proposition I shall shortly speak to is this.

Prop. *That though a Believer at all times sees a need of the presence, and influence of the grace of Christ: yet more especially in the time of afflictions and tryals.*

Return unto me, for I am married unto you (saith the Lord) was Gods language of old to his ancient Spouse, the People of the *Jews*. The Apostle largely pursueth the same metaphor, *Eph.* 5. 32. *This is a great mystery, I speak concerning Christ and the Church*, so he concludeth his discourse; the Wife desireth her Husbands presence at all times. God hath made the Woman the weaker sex, and the Wife stands in daily need of her Husband, (whom God hath made her head) to guide, and conduct her, she is not only as a *Vine* for fruitfulness, but for weakness and dependency also; so is every believing Soul, it hath alwaies need of that promise, *I will never leave you nor forsake you.* But as the Wife hath more especial need of the influence, and assistance of her Husband, in times, and matters of difficulty and distress: so hath the believing Soul, so that he at all times prayeth with *David*, Psal. 27. 9. *Hide not thy face from me, put not away thy Servant in anger, thou hast been my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my Salvation.* The Child of God knoweth what will follow at any time, if the Sun of Righteousness doth not shine upon him, all his protection, strength, life, healing is in the shadow of his Wings. But yet I say he or she seeth a more especial need of his presence and influence, in the noon of sharp Trials, and Afflictions. Hence you shall observe, that though the Servants of God have kept their daily courses of prayer, yet at such times they have used themselves to more solemn addresses, and applications to God, of which you have plentiful instances in Scriptures, in the *solemn fasts*, and prayers put up to God in such times, and their more special Petitions, put up with reference to such times, and dispensations of Providence. Hence *David* cryeth out, *Psal.* 22. 11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is none to help me*, and again, *v.* 19. *Be not thou far from me O God, make haste to help me*; so again, *Psal.* 35. 22. It was a time of great outward straights with *David*, as you may see by reading all the former part of that *Psalm*, *v.* 22. *This* (saith he) *thou hast seen O God, keep not silence, O Lord be not thou far from me*; so *Psal*, 38. 21, 22. *Psal.* 71. 12. Every Christians experience is a full proof of this, so as the Proposition

ſition needeth no further proof, only let me ſhew you the reaſon of it.

Reaſon. The great Reaſon is, *Becauſe we are all of us more prone to live by ſight, then by faith.* The Apoſtle ſaith, *we live by faith, not by ſight.* He tells you what he himſelf, and other Chriſtians then did, and what all good Chriſtians ſhould do. The juſt (ſaith the Prophet) ſhall *live by faith.* But through our infirmity we do live more by ſight, then we do by *faith.* It is a leſſon very hard to fleſh and blood, could we live more by faith, there would be theſe two conſequents to ſuch a life.

1. In the day of our ſenſible contentments, *we ſhould live more upon the word, and promiſes of God, then upon any ſenſible comforts and enjoyments.* But it is hard for us to have a ſtaff lent us, and not to lean upon it, ſo when it breaketh, we come to ſee our errors, and ſee more need of the influences of Divine Grace at ſuch, then at other times.

2. *We ſhould ſee as much in God, and in Chriſt to uphold, and maintain our ſelves in an evil day,* as at *any other times,* for the promiſes are the ſame, and Chriſt in whom all the promiſes are *yea,* and *Amen,* is the ſame, and Gods all-ſufficiency is the ſame, he is at all times *the God that changeth not.* This being premiſed as the great and original cauſe, we may conceive ſome further, and more particular reaſons.

2. Becauſe in this *Noon, all creature comforts fail*: yea, and in ſome afflictions, ſenſible ſpiritual comforts ſometimes fail alſo. In trials that are more external, ſuch as *bodily afflictions,* perſecutions, *&c.* outward comforts fail; when the Sun ſhineth upon our Tabernacles, and the rod of God is not upon us, we are then ready to forget God. when *Jeſhurun* waxed fat, he kicked up the heel, when theſe outward conſolations are taken away, then the Soul beginneth to ſee, that it ſtands in need of ſome other ſupports. If the *affliction* be ſome *divine deſertion,* then the ſenſible conſolations of the Holy Spirit fail alſo, what *David* ſaid in his proſperity, *Pſal.* 30. 6. *I ſhall never be moved,* we are all of us too prone to ſay in the day of our *proſperity,* but as it fared him with, *v.* 7. ſo it fareth with us, *when the Lord hideth his face we are troubled.* It is too natural even to the beſt of men not to know the God of our mercies, in the day of our mercies. It was *Iſraels* ſin, *Hoſea* 2. 8. *For ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oil.* We do not ſo duly attend to that which we profeſs to know, that our Soul, ſtrength, and Soul comforts are from the Lord, and hence it is, that in the day when they are withdrawn, we ſee a more ſpecial need of the preſence, and influ-

ence

ence of Christ upon us. It is the unhappiness, and infirmity of humane nature, that we seldom either understand our mercies, or the Author and Fountain of them, till we come to want them, while we have health, and peace, and liberty, while we have inward strength and quiet, we neither understand the value of these mercies, nor Eye God as we should do, as the Author of them, but in the *worn time* of our *tryals*, and *afflictions*, whether more immediately from God, in *bodily afflictions*, or *divine desertions*, or more immediately from men, then we both understand the value of our mercies, and also what need we have of the presence of God with us, and the influences of God upon us. At other times we live very much upon our more sensible enjoyments, now we have not them to live upon, and so see a more need of a God, and a Christ to live upon.

3. Ordinarily at such a time. *Our lusts, and corruptions move very impetuously.* A man never so well knows the lusts, and corruptions of his own heart, as in an evil day. *Natura vexata prodit Sapsam.* Anger a man (we say) and you will see his temper, when God by his providence vexeth a poor creature as others will see something, so he will see more what lusts, and corruptions are in his heart. The Devil knew this well enough, when he replyed to God commending his servant *Job*, *Put forth now thine hand and touch him*, and *he will curse thee to thy face.* Now as every good Soul keepeth a watch upon his heart and observeth the motions of sin and lust in his Soul, so he never seeth more of the need of the presence and influence of God upon his Soul, then when *Iniquities prevail against him.* When *Paul* cries out of the *body of death*, he presently cries out, *O wretched man that I am who* shall deliver me?

4. Lastly, *His Grand Adversary the Devil is never more busy then at such a time.* Times of afflictions are not only times of divine temptations, when God proveth, and tryeth his People whether they will adhere, and keep close to him, but of *Diabolical Suggestions* and *temptations also.* When the Devil is making tryal whether he can pluck a Soul out of Christs hand, and out of his Fathers hand. The *Psalmist* calls the Devil *The fowler* and he knows hard weather is the best time for his purpose, he first gets a commission against *Job* to take away all that he had, saving his life only and then his Wife cometh, and perswadeth him to *curse God* and dye, and he followeth him with many other Suggestions, and temptations. This was the reason of Saint *Pauls* writing to the Church of *Corinth* to

restore

restore the incestuous Person who by his order was cast out of their communion, lest saith he, he should be *swallowed up of too much grief*; and *Satan* should have *advantage against him, for we are not ignorant of his devices.* We are never so sensible what need we have of our friends, as when our enemies appear most busy, most strong, and active. Hence it is that although a believer seeth a need of the presence and influence of Christ at all times, yet he never seeth so great a need of him as in a time of great and sharp trials, and afflictions, when trouble is hard at hand. I shall shut up this discourse with a Word or two of exhortation shortly.

Use. This should ingage all of us so to behave our selves towards our Lord in the morning of our prosperity that we may not want his presence, and influence, in the noon of our trials, afflictions, and adversity. It is a mighty folly in any of us to live, as we had no Prospect of the ordinary, or necessary contingencies of humane life. *Prudence* quasi *providence*, *Solomon* saith, The wise man hath his Eyes in his head. And these Eyes are imployed in looking forward, as well as round about him at the present. It is a great folly in a man to spend, as if it were not possible he should ever come to want, or to live as if he should never see death. The wise man lives in a constant view of what may be, or what is likely to be, and in some kind of provision for it. It were mighty madness for any in a morning (though it be never so cool) to conclude it would never be *Noon* or *Night*. Man is born to trouble (saith *Job*) as the sparks flie upward. Good men seem to be more particularly designed for it, if not from the appointment of God, who hath ordered their portion in another life, yet from that hatred and enmity which the world hath to them, and to the waies wherein they walk.

It is therefore an high point of wisdom in all men to have them in prospect, and be preparing for them; this can be done no better way than by taking heed to our conversations in times of health, peace and liberty. We must not think to abuse, or to live in the neglect and contempt of a friend, in the time of our prosperity and liberty, and to have him at our beck, ready to help us in the time of our straits and adversity. God had often delievered the *Jews* in their distresses, when they cryed unto him, *Judg.* 10. 6. *They did evil again in the sight of the Lord*, and served *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth*, the gods of *Syria* and *Moab*, *v.* 7. God sold them into the hands of the *Philistins*, and into the hands of the Children of *Ammon*. *V.* 10. *They again cryed unto the Lord*; observe what answer God

gave

gave them, *v.* 11, 12. Did not I deliver you from the *Egyptians*, and from the *Amorites*, from the Children of *Ammon*, and from the *Philistims*? The *Zidonians* also, and the *Amalekites*, and the *Moabites did oppress you, and you cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hands, yet you have forsaken me, and served other gods; Wherefore I will deliver you no more; Go, and cry unto the gods which you have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.* If as we have a need of the presence and influence of Christ at all times, so we shall have a more special apprehension of that need in any time of affliction and distress, we stand highly concerned to take heed how we carry our selves to him in the time of our health, peace, liberty, prosperity. As we use him in the daies of our health, peace, and liberty, so we shall find him in the daies of our sickness, distress, or other adversity: So as considering our subjections to trials and afflictions, here is a potent Argument to persuade our keeping close to the Laws of Christ while we are at liberty. But I shall add no more to my discourse upon this Proposition; and have done with the Spouse's Petition, and come to that Argument by which she presseth this Petition, ---*For why should I be as one who turneth aside by the flocks of thy Companions?* When I opened the words, I noted to you, *That the* 70 *Interpreters*, *Montanus*, and some others, translate the words *as one that covereth her self*: περιβαλλομένη, so the *Dutch Annotators*; *Junius* and *Tremellius*, as *one that stretcheth out a Tent*, by the *flocks of thy Companions*. The *Syriack*, and the *Ethiopick Versions*, and the *Vulg. Lat.* who is also followed by *Pagnine*, translate it, *as one that wandreth*, or *one that turneth aside.*

The *Radical word* is עטה, which primarily signifieth to cover, in a secondary sense to *wander* or turn aside. I before noted, that covering denoted three things amongst the *Eastern Nations*. 1. *Modesty*. Virgins therefore went vailed into the company of men especially. 2. *Shame*. Harlots therefore covered themselves, as you read, *Gen.* 38. 14. 3. *Sorrow*, *Ezek.* 24. 17. So as the sense of the words seemeth to be this.

Why should I that am married to thee, be taken for one not married to thee, or for one that goeth on whoring from thee? or for one that is a mourner, through great grief and heavinesse?

Or if you take it in the second sense, she plainly hints her aptness to wander without the conduct and guidance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and accordingly she deprecateth it. By *wandring* or *turning*

aside, must be understood a deviation from the statutes and Commandments of God. By that term [*the flocks* of thy *Companions*] I told you some understanding *Idolaters*, some, *Hereticks*, the *Idolater* makes his *Idol Christs Companion*, giving it the same worship that is due to him. The heretick maketh some creature, his leader, Christs *Companion*, taking his *Instruction* from him. But I told you I should rather understand it of true Christians, whom the *Apostle* saith Christ is not ashamed to call Brethren, but yet the former sense being imbraced by grave, and reverend Authors, I shall not pass it over without a few words relating to it. Observe then,

1. Here are two things which the Spouse seemeth to fear, and so deprecateth, *Sin*, and *Scandal*; Sin especially those two great Sins of *Idolatry* and *Heresie*. *Scandal* lest she should be any ways a reproach to the Gospel, and give occasion to any to speak evil of the waies of God, and to reproach the Gospel.

2. The Spouse in this reason that she gives for her Petition, doth suggest, that without the influence and support of her Lord, she should never be able in an hour of great temptation, to make straight steps to her feet, and to keep her self upright, she should be ready to wander and turn aside.

3. That which the Spouse expresseth, is *an earnest desire to be kept from sin, and from scandal*: She doth therefore use this as an Argument to plead with her Lord for his presence and influence, that she might not sin against the Lord, nor being overcome with temptations, or swallowed up with grief, become a scandal to her Profession. Here are two things which offer themselves as matter for my Discourse.

1. The *insufficiency of a Soul* to avoid *sin and scandal*, without the *presence and influence of Christ upon it*. This the Spouse owneth and acknowledgeth. It is as much as if she should say, *Lord*, if thou doest not help and assist me in the *Noon* of my trials and afflictions, if thou dost not shew me, where at such times thou feedest thy flocks, and makest them to rest at Noon, I shall wander, I shall turn aside by the flocks of those that are set up for thy Companions; I shall go a whoring from thee, and upon that account *walk* as one *covered for shame*, amongst those who are thy People. But this is a subject which I have before handled, when I discoursed upon those words; *Draw me, and we will run after thee.*

2. The second thing is, The two great objects of a believing *Soul's fear*, are *sin and scandal*. Why should I wander, or turn aside,

or

or walk as one covered for shame, like an Harlot? All these senses speak her fear of sin. Or, why should I walk as a mourner, covered and dejected? or as an unbeliever, one that is not married to thee? Those senses of the words express her fear of scandal.

Prop. That *sin*, and *Scandal are the two great objects, of the believing Souls fear.*

What sin is I need not spend many Words to tell you. The Apostle gives you the full notion of it when he calleth it ἀνομία. A Non-conformity to the divine law, which notion comprehendeth *original sin*, which lyeth in the absence of the divine Image, and the ill complexion of the Soul resulting from it, and actual sin, which is well described by *Augustine* to be, *every thought, Word, and deed which is contrary to the holy Law of God.* Sin is often in Scripture set out under the notion of erring, wandring, going astray, and that dependeth upon another Metaphor we often meet with in Scripture, comparing a course of holiness unto a *way*, with relation to which *sin* (which is a deviation from holiness) is expressed by the notions of *erring*, wandering, going astray, turning aside, &c. The Precepts of God are expressed also under the notion of a rule and a guide; hence sin is called a crooked way. Now all sin is the object of the believers fear but not all alike. For as there is a difference in the guilt of sin, so there will be a difference in the Souls fear, it will most tremble at those sins which render it most obnoxious to the wrath of God, of which nature *Idolatry is*; and indeed the guilt of it much lyeth here, that in that sin the creature is made the companion of God, and the Worship due unto God alone is either given unto it or shared betwixt God and it. The notion of Scandal is not so obvious, I shall therefore inlarge a little in my discourse on that. The Words *Scandal* and *Scandalize* are hardly found in any Prophane Authors; the Scripture therefore must open that term to us. A Scandal properly and strictly, is something laid in a mans way at which one is prone to stumble, and fall, the Word which the Septuagint translate by this Word we translate a stumbling block, *Levit.* 19. 14. *Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind.* The *Hebrew* Word is by our translators rendred *offence*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 31. This is all we can get from the *Etymology* of the Word, it signifies any thing at which another stumbles, and falls, thence it is *applyed* to such things as are to others *occasions of sin* which is the stumbling, and falling of the Soul; so *Aquinas* I think rightly describeth *Scandals* to be *any Words, or actions of ours by which others have an occasion of ruin*;

That is sinning which is the Spiritual ruin of a man, or woman. In this sense man only can be Scandalized, he cannot be tempted to evil. But two wayes a Scandal may reflect upon God.

1. As by our carriages his glory may be prejudiced amongst men, his name blasphemed, his wayes reproached, and these actions which produce such effects we call Scandals.

2. *As others by our carriages may be induced to sin against God.* So that Scandals may be committed two wayes. When we so behave our selves as we cause the Master which we serve, the Gospel which we profess, or the way wherein we walk to be evil spoken of; or that others by our example are inticed to sin. Scandals are ordinarily divided, into such as are not only taken but given also: and such as are meerly taken but not given.

1. The latter is what is called *Scandalum Phariſæorum.* The scandal of the *Pharisees* because they were so offended at our Saviour. This is when men are offended at us and speak evil of us or of the wayes of God for our sake, though we do nothing but what is our duty, and we must not omit for the offence of any Persons. These are now only passive Scandals, Scandals taken, and not given, and the guilt lyeth not upon those who do the actions but upon those who are troubled that others are more righteous then they, and will do what they judge God requireth of them, without regard to the pleasing or displeasing of any. These are not the Scandals which a good man feareth.

2. But then there is an *active Scandal* or a *Scandal given*, and this may be two wayes.

1. *By any open sinful actions.* Thus we call *open sinning Scandalous sinning.* Because it giveth a just offence to all good People, and because it of its own nature tendeth to cause the name of God to be blasphemed, and the Gospel, and wayes of God to be reproached, and evil spoken of, and is an inducement to others also to sin against God.

2. It is also committed *by an ill use of our liberty*, in things where Gods Law hath left us our liberty, when we will do actions, which although we think we may do, yet others think are unlawful, and our doing of them may either cause them that have another opinion to reproach us and our profession, or induce them doubting concerning the lawfulness of them, yet to do them because they see us whom they look upon as stronger, doing of them, thus we abuse our liberty by chusing that action by which our Brother is offended, grieved or made weak, now these

Scandals

Scandals are such as next to our personal plain sinnings ought to be the object of all good Christians fear.

I must confess as to these last mentioned Scandals, by actions, in which I judge God hath left me in his Law a full and perfect liberty, but others have not the same apprehensions so as my taking one part may cause in other Christians, hard thoughts or hard speeches concerning me. Or if not so, yet my example may induce them though they doubt, yet to adventure upon the same actions, and sin against God, (for *he that doubteth* is *damned* if he eateth, that which another who doubteth not may freely eat.) I say as to such *Scandals* there is a very *hard question in Divinity*, viz. *what is a Christians duty, suppose him pressed by a Superiours command* on the one side, if he doth not do it he disobeyeth his Superiours in a thing which he confesseth not to be forbidden by the Word God, and so seemeth to sin against the Precept of obedience to them. On the other side he seeth, that if he doth the thing, he shall not onely grieve many good Christians who think the thing lawful, but possibly cause them to intertain hard thoughts of him, or to speak hardly of him: or if not so, yet (which is worse) to do the same thing though they doubt of the lawfulness. Nay further it may be that the command of Superiors in the case may be attended with penalties which may ruin a man & his family. What is to be done here is an hard case: That it is not our duty to *obey Superiours* in all things is out of question: that we ought to obey them in things of which we are strongly perswaded that they are unlawful, whether they be so or no, is what no weighed Divine will say; whether this be not, though not Originally, yet with respect to circumstances a thing unlawful, so as it is not just matter of a Superiours Precept, that is the question. On the other side: That St. *Paul* said he would never *eat flesh while the World stood rather then make his brother to offend*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. I observe, St. *Paul* doth not say I will eat *no meat*, but no *flesh* while the World standeth; flesh is but one *Species* of meat, he might eat other things, and support his life. And *as* to that *Species* of meat, it must doubtless be restrained by the former discourse: which is of *meat* that had been set before Idols: This he determines *unlawful* (1 *Cor.* 20. doubtless it is unlawful for a man to *starve* himself rather then offend his Brother. St. *Paul* speaks of a thing if not unlawful, yet as to which he was at a full liberty;

he

he could forbear it without any remarkable prejudice to himself. Besides, the *Scandal* in the case is but a contingency, he is not sure his Brother will be made to offend by his *example or action*. The case is a very hard case, but I shall spend no more Words about it, that being not the *Scandal* which cometh within the compass of my text: But either such Scandal as ariseth from *actions* plainly sinful, or at least actions, that have no such circumstances. Whether we interpret *covered*, as an *harlot* was covered, or as a mourner was covered, both such Scandals are the just fears of all good Christians.

1. *Sin* is the object of every good Christians fear upon many accounts. As it *defileth the Soul* and taketh away its beauty, and comeliness, *as it rendereth the Soul guilty* and obnoxious to the wrath of God: As it *Spoileth the Souls peace*, & causeth sour reflections of conscience. As it *hazardeth the Souls Salvation*. As indeed it is the cause of that evil, all that evil that can befall a man, especially considering that every good Christian knoweth this, and in one degree or other hath felt it so as it needeth no more then its own former experience to confirm it, and can have no fruit, no pleasure, in those things for which it hath formerly so trembled, and of which it hath been, and is still ashamed. He that loves the Lord hateth evil, *Psal.* 97. 10. *David* hated the works of them that turned aside, *Psal.* 101. 3. Now whatsoever is the object of our *hatred* when it cometh near us, and we see a probability of being surprized with it we naturally fear.

2. As to *scandal*: If it be given by any *sinful action of ours*, it is doubtless sin, and to be feared equally with any other sin, it being but the aggravation of a sinful act. The case is also the same, if it be caused through an *ill use of our liberty*, in a case where we have a *perfect liberty*, though the act be not in it self sinful, yet the circumstance makes it so. The reason is, because in things of an indifferent nature we are tied up to general Rules, and are obliged to do that which shall be most, 1. *For the glory of God.* 2. *For the good of others.* 3. *Which will give least offence to Jew or Gentile.* Those golden Rules given us by the Apostle, in 1 *Cor.* 10. 31, 32, 33. There are three great Reasons why every good Christian will as much fear *scandal*, as any other more plain downright sinning.

1. *The concern of the glory of God*; that is an end we must aim at in all our actions, whether *Natural*, *Moral*, or *Religious*. The glory of God is as much prejudiced by the sin of another, as by my own

sin;

sin; so that in all scandals the honour of God is wounded two waies; 1. By *my own sin*, who ought not so to have used the liberty which his Word left me. 2. *By the others sinning occasioned by my sin.* *David*'s Eyes ran down with Rivers of water, because others did not keep the Law of God.

2. *The concern of his Brothers Soul*, which is destroyed by his sin. For thy meat (saith the Apostle) destroy not thy Brother, for whom Christ died. God makes it a mark of hatred of our Brother, not to reprove him, nor to suffer sin upon him; how much greater hatred must it speak in us to give him *Exemplum malæ rei ædificantes in gehennam* (as *Tertullian* somewhere describes scandal) to set him an example contributing to his destruction. Love will not lay a stumbling block in the path of the blind. How can any man say, he loveth his Brother, that doth not not lay a stumbling block before his Brother, to make his body to stumble and fall, but to make his Soul to fall?

3. *The concern of the peace and quietness of his own Soul is in it too.* He that is of any tenderness of Conscience, will find no peace in the doing of any thing which reflecteth any dishonour upon God, or tendeth to destroy his Brother for whom Christ died.

We may learn from hence, *that the fear of sin and scandal, are no ill signs in any Souls in whom they are found.* It is a noble and Divine temper to be afraid of sinning against God. The best of men in the Old Testament are ordinarily described under the notion of *men fearing God.* No man can fear God but the man that feareth sin; whether he feareth the Lord, and his power, and greatness, with a more servile fear, or feareth the Lord and his goodness, which is a more filial and ingenuous fear, one of the first fruits, or prime evidences of it, is a fear of sinning against God; and that man who *feareth not sin*, feareth not God. It is true, there may be an excess of this fear, through our infirmity, ignorance, and mistake; a man may have a timorated Conscience, and be sometimes afraid where no fear is, and this often happeneth in Persons under the power, and prevailing of Melancholy, which darkeneth a man's reason. In such a case it is rather the effect of a natural disease, than the genuine and proper motion of a reasonable Soul. A man also free from that distemper, through ignorance and infirmity may be afraid of actions as sinful, which indeed are not so; but this is an errour on the right hand. It is much better in this case to fear too much, than too little; to forbear many lawful actions for fear of sinning against God in them, when the weak Conscience is not fully satisfied, Use 1.

satisfied, then to run on adventurously, when the Conscience doubteth. Let others despise and mock at Persons, as those that would be too precise and pure, that durst not do some actions as to which others make no difficulty; nay, it may be think them their duty. My Soul shall, I hope, alwaies reverence those in whom I discern an uniform fear of sin. If men indeed strain at Gnats, and swallow Camels; pretend a Conscience in some things, but regard not the dictates of it in other things, this is Hypocrisie; this is but a pretended fear. But if you see Christians in all their other waies strict and conscientious, taking heed to their waies, though I may think that in some things they fear too much, and scruple what I do not scruple, nor see any sin in, yet I hope I shall alwaies reverence such Persons. I may be mistaken as well as they, and who hath made me more infallible than they are? It is a noble temper to be afraid of sinning against God, and so consequently to be afraid of scandal, not only of doing acts that are openly sinful, but of doing such actions which we think we cannot do without grieving, offending, and making to stumble and fall those for whom Christ died. If Christ had such a value for Souls, as for the Redemption of them, to come down from Heaven to Earth, and to die upon the Cross, certainly they should not be so cheap in my sight; as for the good of them, I will not forbear the least thing which I may as well forbear as do. It is possible that Religious People may fear *scandal* too much: They may in some particulars be afraid of their *duty*, for fear of offending Brethren; they may lay too great a stress upon a *scandal of grief*. But these are very pardonable things in comparison of mens neither fearing God nor men, and running on in courses of actions, without regarding the offence of God or of men. Every good man will in your City be wary of leaving ladders in streets, or heaps of muck, or any pits uncovered, from whence Persons in the dark may receive any mischief, and this is but in conformity to the antient Law of God, which commanded the Jews to lay no stumbling blocks in the way of the blind: Have we charity for our neighbours Bodies, and have we none for their Souls? Are we tender of making them wound, or break a bodily limb, and have we no regard to the making them wound the honour and glory of God, and the peace of their own Souls, and to hazard their own eternal Salvation? If once had any drams of true *Brotherly Love*, they would at least forbear actions, as to which they have a perfect liberty, with which they know many modest Persons will

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be offended. This I speak as to things in which they have a perfect liberty. For what things I apprehend that I ought to do as my duty toward God, or to forbear upon that account, I can neither do the one, nor forbear the other, to avoid *offending* others, the reason is, because *Charity* (as we say) ought to begin at home; every man or woman is obliged in the first place to attend, and look after the Peace and eternal Salvation of his own Soul.

Obj. But you will say to me, *What shall we do in cases where we are under the command of Superiours, to do things which yet we see we cannot do, but we shall give occasion of offence to Christians not so well satisfied as we are?*

Sol. I told you before, that I apprehend this a very hard case. The Law of God obligeth me to *obey* my Superiours; it also commandeth me to *give no offence*, to lay no stumbling block before my Brother, and this Law concerneth *Superiours* as well as *Inferiours*. As I ought not to do any such actions which probably may give occasion to my Brother to sin; so no Superiours ought to command me to do any such things: Superiours therefore unquestionably sin, in making any such things the matters of their command. But admit they will not do their duty, still the question is, what is mine?

I do not think the command of a Superior in this case can take hold of my conscience, my reason is, because his command in this case is contrary to the command of God who hath commanded him as well as me to give *no offence*, to lay no stumbling block in the way of his Brother. If he sinneth in the matter of his command I cannot sin in withholding my *active obedience*, that is certain. But if he will not be sensible of his duty, not only command, but command under penalties that I though originally at liberty must do the thing, or ruin my self and family, this much narroweth the case. Here now the question lyes: Whether in a matter, as to which I have originally a perfect liberty, and so judge but through the iniquity of a Superiors command, must either do or forbear this or that action or ruin my self and family: and on the other side, if I do do it, or do forbear it, I see I shall not only *grieve my Brother*, but cause him to *sin* probably, what is my duty? Whether ought the *contingency* of my *Brothers stumbling*, and sinning by my example, to rule me and cause me rather to chuse the loss of all. I must confess I do here a little hesitate. My reason is, because my Brothers fall is not necessitated by my action, he ought to live by *rule* not by *example*, to follow me no further then I follow Christ, to allow me to live by my

own *faith*, while yet he lives and walks by his own faith. That may be lawful to me, which to him is not lawful because he doubteth, and cannot see with my eyes. Oh! how happy would the World be, if Superiors would only press things which they apprehend necessary by a divine Precept (I mean in relation to the things of God, for in civil things Superiours are more absolute Judges) and if in any thing they mistake and apprehend things such which indeed are not, they would be very tender (for that can be but in very few cases) and if private Persons, would learn not to judge others but in things where they see them act apertly, and plainly against the will of God, and not arrogate infallibility to themselves, and others would learn not to be too positive upon their own apprehensions, nor make others practice their rule, but to live by their own faith. But this is but a digression; I say, it is a good thing to fear sin, and to fear Scandal.

Use 2. I shall shut up this discourse with an *Exhortation* to Christians, to make *sin*, and *Scandal* the objects of their fear I shall not need to inlarge much upon the first, it being the confessed duty of every one that owneth the name of a Christian, or any relation to Jesus Christ. He that feareth not what is plainly sinful feareth God in no sense, he neither feareth the Lord and his greatness, nor yet the Lord, and his goodness I shall only tell you that he who feareth sin, feareth the *occasions*, and *appearances* of it. But I shall rather press the exhortation with reference to Scandal, calling upon you to take heed of any actions,

1. Which may draw out the lusts and corruptions of other mens hearts to entertain any hard thoughts, or use any hard speeches concerning Profession, and Religion. Now these are in the first place, 1. *All actions that are openly sinful*; this was that which stuck to *David*, when he had committed those two great sins of *Adultery* with *Bathsheba*, and the *murder of Uriah*, and God had declared his pardoning him these sins, nevertheless saith he, *because thou hast* made the *Enemies* of *God to Blaspheme, the Child shall* dye, *the Sword shall never depart from thy house*. The honour and glory of God is a tender thing, and it is a dreadful thing for Christians to give a cause for the name of God to be evilly spoken of.

2. But 2dly good Christians are not only concerned to take heed of such actions, as are acts of plain *impiety* and *unrighteousness*. But of such behaviour, and such acts, as should make Religion and religious Persons appear unlovely, to the World; let me instance in three or four things.

1. *Take*

2. *Take heed either of an over sad, and pensive, or of an over light, and cheerful behaviour.* The sober and serious Christian, that knoweth his times to laugh, and times to weep, and decent measures to be observed in both, is the only man that honoureth Religion. He that *walks covered*, by *the flocks of Christs companions*, *covered* as a mourner, or *covered* as if he were not *married to Christ*, or *covered as an harlot*, whose face is always full of shame and his Eyes always full of tears, doth not honour Religion; let a Christian betwixt God and his Soul alone, cover himself with as much shame as he will, and let his Eyes run down with tears in his closet, but take heed of dishonouring Profession by a continual drooping, and sadness. That Christian that is over merry, and jolly offends on the other hand, and as much Scandalizeth Profession. *Canst thou be merry, canst thou play foolish Soul who sinnedst to day?* (saith our *English Poet*) we sin too much to be over *frolick*. Both these extreams are to be avoided.

2. *Take heed of a rash tongue.* I know none more Scandalize *Religion and Godliness*, than such whose Tongues must be alwaies running, and who give themselves a liberty to say, *Quidlibet de quolibet*, any thing of any Persons, who say, *report* and *we will report it*. Hence *James* accounts the Government of the tongue to the *perfection of Religion*. The tongue is a *little member*, saith *James*, *Jam.* 2. 5 but it kindleth great fires, *it is a World of iniquity*, an *unruly evil*, full of *deadly Poison*; I know nothing by which Religion is more Scandalized, then by the ungoverned tongues of Professors.

3. Take heed of being *busie bodies in other mens matters*. They who must have an Oar in every Boat, besides that they never row their own Boat well, shall be sure to have every body quarrelling with them. You shall observe that the Scripture never gives a busie body a good character. He reckons them as Persons that walk disorderly, 2 *Thes.* 3. 11. He joyneth them with idle Persons, 2 *Tim.* 5. 13. He commands men to take heed of suffering upon this score, 1 *Pet.* 4. 15.

3. And lastly; Good Christians ought *to take heed of those actions or carriages, which although themselves judge lawful, (and possibly they are so) yet are generally offensive to Christians, and the most serious Christians, especially in those Churches and places in which God hath cast their lot.* All see not with the same Eyes, and we ought to have regard to the Souls of others, and to a Peace with others.

Hence some things may be lawful for us in one place, and under some circumstances, which are unlawful in other places, and under other circumstances. Now such things may either concern *Religious duties*, as to the Acts of which, though all be agreed, yet they may not as to circumstances. Where thou hast a *perfect Liberty*, it is thy duty to forbear such circumstances, as, though thou thinkest lawful, yet thou seest will be grievous and offensive to others. 2. As to our *Civil behaviour* in matters of *habits* and *dresses*. It may be thou thinkest the things in themselves lawful, others think them unlawful. *Why shouldst thou walk like one covered by the flock of Christ's Companions?* Why shouldest thou for an indifferent thing, bring thy self under the hard thoughts of any number of serious Christians. The things themselves in thy apprehension are *lawful*, and it is also lawful for thee to decline them; why shouldest thou not chuse the less offensive part? You may learn from *1 Cor.* 11. that Christians in such things as these are to *have a great respect* to the common guise and custom of places, and especially to the common guise and custom to such as themselves in those places. God forbad the Jews the very habits of Heathens. I believe good Christians as much prohibited the habits of prophane Persons, so far as they are distinct from those of the generality of sober Christians: So in matters of *Pastime* and *Recreation*: For Games depending upon meer *Lot* and *Chance*. What though Judicious Divines do not all determine them unlawful, yet some do, others, and many conscientious Christians, doubt concerning them; possibly thou dost not; if thou doubtest, thou art bound to forbear them, to take the safer part; but admit thou dost not doubt, yet in places where any considerable number of conscientious Christians doubt, thou art bound to forbear; why should thy Liberty be condemned by other mens Consciences? Why shouldest thou walk covered by *the flocks of Christ's Companions*? I shall shut up this Discourse with the words of the Apostle, *Phil.* 4. 8. *Finally Brethren, Whatsoevtr things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

Sect.

Sermon XLIV.

Cant. i. 8.

If thou knowest not (O thou fairest amongst Women) Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kidds besides the Shepherds Tents.

I Have done with the Spouse's *Petition*, and am come to her Beloved's Answer. In which I have observed three things.

1. *A friendly Compellation*; *O thou fairest amongst Women!*

2. *A Supposition* that she might be ignorant of some things relating to communion with him---*If thou knowest not.*

3. *A Direction in this case: Go thy way by the footsteps of the Flocks*, &c. Hence three Propositions are obvious.

Prop. 1. *That of all Souls, the truly believing Soul is the most beautiful Soul in the Eyes of Christ.*

Prop. 2. *That the beauty of this Soul is not perfect.* This Soul may be in some things ignorant, and at a loss how to *maintain communion with God at some times.*

Prop. 3. *That the surest way for a gracious Soul to get a perfect Instruction in those things which concern its spiritual good, and to keep and enjoy its communion with Christ, is to feed it self by the Tents of his Shepherds, and to live according to the Precepts of his Word, and the Examples of his Church there recorded.*

I shall begin with the first.

Prop. 1. *That of all Souls, the Believer is the most beautiful Soul in the Eyes of Christ.*

I will inquire a little into the Nature of the Believing Soul's Beauty: Then I shall give you some Reasons of it; and lastly, Make some Application.

1. *It is not a corporeal visible Beauty*, but *spiritual and invisible.* When we speak of Beauty, we ordinarily understand a symmetry of bodily parts, with a due mixture of the colours of flesh and blood com-

commending it self to the carnal Eye. This is that of which *Solomon* saith, *Favour is deceitful; Beauty is vain*, but none I hope will have so gross a conception of the Soul's Beauty in the Eyes of Christ, who seeth not as man seeth, and judgeth not from any outward appearance. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within*, *Psal.* 45.13. This Beauty lieth in the Soul's symmetry to, and with the Divine Law, in a due proportion of virtues and gracious habits in the Soul's conformity to God the pattern of Perfection. The Heathens, by the Light of Nature, could see that the inward Beauty was the true Beauty. It is reported of *Diogenes*, that meeting with a young man who was exceeding comely, but very vitious, he cried out, *O quàm bona domus, & malus hospes!* What a brave house is here, and how bad an inhabitant it hath! It is what may be said of a great many comely men and women in the world: O what brave houses hath the God of Nature made, but what ill Tenants hath the *Devil* thrust into them? Within there dwells nothing but *Pride*, *Ignorance*, *Lust*, *Vanity*, and other Inmates of corruption. Our Saviour hath fitted them with a name, they are *Painted Sepulchres*. The Spouse's Beauty is Spiritual, her *Ornaments are the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible* (as the Apostle speaketh,) 1 *Pet.* 3.4. And as corporeal Beauty lieth in the due proportion of the parts of the body one to another, yet this alone will not make a Beauty, without a due proportion of colours, and a good Air of the countenance: So this Spiritual Beauty lieth in the proportion of the Soul and its several powers and faculties to the Divine Rule, its *Symmetry* with the Divine Nature; yet this will not do without the *grace of Justification*, that grace which doth *gratum facere*, render the Soul acceptable in the sight of God. Hence this Beauty is not obvious to our senses. *The World* (saith the Apostle) *knoweth us not*. It is a Spiritual Beauty, so as flesh and blood discerneth it not; whereas we see things by the *Eye of Sense*, *Reason* or *Revelation*. Corporeal Beauty is discerned by a carnal Eye; the object beareth a due proportion to the *Organ*: Yea, there is an inward Beauty, which even the Eye of a *natural man* may discern; it lieth in the proportion which the mind of the man or woman beareth to the Rule of Virtue, and the Principles of Reason. Thus a man may see more Beauty and Loveliness in one that is Learned and knowing, than in one that is ignorant; in one that is just, chast, sober, temperate, than in a beastly Drunkard, a sottish unclean Adulterer, an unjust and unrighteous man, *&c.* But the Beauty of a Child of God lieth deeper,

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and more remote from a carnal mans apprehension, in the Soules *Symmetry* with the *pure*, and *holy nature of God*. the proportions of his Soul to the pattern of a disciple of Christ as his lineaments are drawn in holy Writ. This the natural Eye seeth not, the Spiritual man alone discerneth, nor doth he at all times discern it in another, *Eli* could not see *Hannahs* beauty, but thought it had been only a little colour which too much wine had brought into her face. The Subject of this beauty is the heart, Christ seeth, and knoweth that hence, though a Child of God doth appear fair to his Brother, yet to Christ more fair, even the fairest amongst Women.

2. Secondly, It is not a *Native* but an *adventitious beauty*, you (saith the Apostle) hath he *quickened* who were dead in *trespasses and sins*. Eph. 2. 1. *Children of wrath by nature even as others*, v. 3. By nature *there is none righteous, no not one, none that understandeth, nor seeketh after God*, the Philosopher spake like a Philosopher when he determined the Soul to be naturally as *white Paper* or *tabula rasa*. The Divine must speak otherwise there is in man a want *justitiæ debitæ ineſſe*, a want of that image of God in which lies the Soules beauty; He was created in honour, but he is become like the Beast that perisheth, he hath lost the *image* of the *heavenly*, *Behold* (saith *David*, Psal. 51.) I was *shapen in iniquity*, and *in sin did my Mother bring me forth*. *What can be clean* (saith Job) *that is born of a Woman?* Or how can that which is clean come forth from *that which is unclean*. The vitious inclinations of Children is matter of demonstration, till they be in some measure corrected, by the precepts and instructions, and government of those that are set over them, and by moral discipline, which yet doth not cultivate and adorn them sufficiently to render them beautiful in the Eyes of Christ.

3. Thirdly, it is not an *Artificial* but *created beauty*. The beauty of the Civil person, that either from the precepts or examples of his governours or his ingenuous education, hath imbibed Principles of Moral Discipline is indeed no *native beauty*, but it is an *artificial beauty*, as to which God hath had no hand but that of his common Providence, but the Spouse's beauty is a *created beauty*, wholly Gods work in the Soul, creating faith in it, uniting it to Christ, changing its heart, giving it new habits, new qualities, and inclinations. *Thou wert*

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comely,

comely, saith God, *Ezech.* 16. 14. *through my comelines put upon thee.* Corporeal beauty is the work of God in nature, and it is hardly in the power of man to contribute any thing towards that. The Painter dissembleth a beauty, but giveth no real beauty; the Taylor dissembleth a *Symmetry* of parts but cannot give it. But Spiritual beauty is much more the gift of God, that is, a Gift of Special grace. Art may make a woman that is not beautiful appear so, but it cannot make one to be beautiful that is not so. Good works do little more to the Saints beauty in the Eyes of Christ then hansome cloaths, or linnen doth towards the beauty of the body. If the body be comely, and beautiful, hansome fashioned cloaths or linnen may indeed set it off, but if the body hath no true symmetry of parts, all that good cloaths do is to hide deformity, and to make the body that is not comely yet appear so unto others. If the Soul of a man or woman be truly beautiful through an *imputed righteousnes and inherent grace*, good works much set forth this beauty to the world, and are also acceptable unto God. But works only *Morally* good, that is, such things as God hath commanded, can never make a Spiritual *Ethiopian* fair, nor the Soul that is naturally crooked, straight. The Romish Taylors, and Painters, labour in vain to make Souls beautiful by prescription of good works, not flowing from a true faith in Jesus Christ; indeed the truely beautiful Soul will *maintain good works for necessary uses*, and not be seen in any part of the world, or in any station in it, but clothed with them, the Kings Daughter though all glorious within, yet must have her garments also smell of *Myrrh, Aloes,* and *Cassia*, but these are not her onely beauty in the Eyes of her beloved, she still cries out, O Lord, my righteousnes is all as a menstruous cloth, as an unclean thing. I am altogether in my self, as a filthy and unclean thing.

4. *The beauty of the Child of God is not onely Adherent but also Inherent.* Justification is his *beauty*, this I call *adherent*, he is in a state of favour with God, & hath a right to be called his Child. *Regeneration* is his *inherent beauty*, and makes not onely a change in his state, but in his nature and temper. *Justification* maketh an alteration in the Souls state, and relation to God, before that it was an enemy, now a Child, it cannot be properly said to be any thing inherent in us, rather adherent to us, without it the Soul cannot be comely in the Eyes of Christ, those who in *John's*

vision

vision were seen *clothed in white*, were such as were *washed in the blood of the lamb*. Let the Vertues of mens Souls be never so eminent, their actions never so splendid, yet while they are not justified, they cannot be fair in the Eyes of Christ, who judgeth not according to the outward appearance, but according to the heart. But yet this is not all the Spouse's beauty; In the same moment wherein by justifying the sinner, God maketh a change in his state, he also maketh a change in his heart; this cannot be alone, neither is it causative of the other. Those are wonderfully vain that charge us with asserting, that God can be pleased with an unholy Soul or that any such Soul is fair and lovely in the Eyes of that God, who is of purer Eyes, then that he can behold any iniquity. This is what Protestants do affirm; That God reckoneth the righteousness, or comeliness of Christ unto to the Soul, and so makes us comely, and in the same moment gives his Spirit to it, to renew & sanctifie it, and dwell in it, & that both these make up the Spiritual beauty & comeliness, but God doth not accept our Persons upon the latter, but upon the former account; yet we say, This conformity of the heart to the will of God wrought by regeneration, is a great part of the Souls comliness. *Thou hast* (saith Christ) *ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished mine heart with one of the Chains about thy neck*, *Cant.* 4.9. This we also further say, That although this *inherent beauty*, be not that for which Christ accepteth the Person of a Child of God, yet God is well pleased with it, and it doth much increase Gods manifestative love towards a Person, *John* 14. 21.

5. Fifthly, The beauty of the Child of God is a *desirable beauty* desirable to God. Indeed all beauty is desirable; this is to God *desirable*. You must understand it safely. All desire in the creature speaketh some want and indigences, in God it only speaks *complacence*, Psal. 45. 4. *So shall the King desire thy beauty*, the meaning is no more then be well pleased with thy Beauty. God is well pleased with their Souls and his will moveth toward them, and the enjoyment of them, not to fill up any vacuity or emptiness in himself, but to fill up their *emptinesses with the fulness of himself who filleth all in all*. Thus the Schoolmen say truly, That though the creature works, and moves to supply his own indigence, yet God never moveth nor worketh but to communicate his own perfection and fulness.

6. The beauty of the Child of God is a *never fading beauty*. Corporeal beauty is vain, age, sickness, contagious diseases, many accidents, either greatly abate, or destroy this. This Spiritual beauty, though it may abate, yet shall never fail; It is one of Gods gifts to the Soul which are without repentance, It is caused from the seed of God which abideth in the Soul. The appearance of it to the world may abate, but its beauty cannot wholly fail and perish. It is as the air of the Soul resulting from its state of Justification, which altereth not, and from the infused habits of Regeneration which cannot dye.

7. Lastly, *It is not a perfect beauty*. The inherent beauty of Gods People is perfect, the Soul that is justifyed from the guilt of one sin is justifyed from the guilt of all sins. God never forgives in part (if we understand by forgiving, remitting the obligation sin layeth us under to Eternal death.) But the inherent beauty of the Children of God is imperfect, we know in part, and love in part; sincerity is all we can glory in, all our perfection as to that. The habits of grace infused in *Regeneration* are capable of increase and augmentation, nor will any be perfect in them till he comes to dye: No nor then neither, for though the actings of some grace proportioned to our indigent mortal state will then cease (and so in that sense may be said to be perfected) yet *Love* and delight in God, habits of Grace which we shall carry with us into, and exercise in another world shall be made perfect there. But in the exercises of our habits of grace the best of Gods People are much more imperfect, laying many a black patch upon a fair face, which the pure God seeth, and can distinguish from *Beauty spots*. Though for them he will not cast his people off.

Thus far I have shewed you the nature of the Spouses beauty. I shall now shew you whence it is, that such a Soul in the Eyes of Christ is the *fairest amongst Women*. This will appear but reasonable if we consider,

That their beauty is Christs workmanship. I told you before that it is not an *artificial beauty*, nor *natural*, but *created* and superinduced upon the Soul; The holy Scripture calls man *Gods Generation*, *Acts* 17. 29. and borroweth the expression from an Heathen Poet, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν, they saw that by the light of Nature. The Apostle tells us, Eph. 2. 10. *That we are Gods workmanship created to good works, which God had before ordained*.

dained, that we should walk in them, God, had ordained it Christ wrought it. Whatsoever of good a Child of God hath in him it is all from God, he is *begotten of God*, *John* 1. 13. We are *created* by him to good works, and he worketh in us to will and do. Are we *justified*, and is that any part of our beauty? We are *justified by his grace*, *washed in his blood*. *Except I wash you* (saith Christ) *you have no part in me*. It is natural to us all to account any thing best, and fairest, to which our selves have contributed any thing as a cause. The Father and Mother value their own Child above any others: The man of art takes most delight in his own *workmanship*. God can do nothing, but what is truly, and highly good, and he cannot but be most pleased in his own work.

2. Secondly, *The beauty of the Child of God is Christs beauty*, and *lyeth in the Souls assimilation, or being made like* unto Christ. Is he justifyed? It is by the *imputation of his righteousness*. Is he *regenerated*? It is through his *Spirit* and by his regeneration, the *image of God*, and Christ is renewed in him in *Knowledge, righteousness and holiness*, the like mind is in him that was in Christ. Likeness is the Mother of Love, and all Love floweth from some likeness or conceived likeness in the object beloved. Christ cannot but love that Soul that is made partaker of the Divine nature, & renewed according to his image, & made like unto himself. The believer was predestinated to be conform to the Image of the Son, & by Faith & *Regeneration* he is made conform, renewed according *to the image of God*, (according to the Apostles phrase.) If *Jacob* knew his sons coat again, and the sight of it was enough to set the Fathers bowels on yerning, Christ will doubtless know his own robes, and cannot but account that Soul most beautiful, that is adorned with & dressed in them.

This in the first place may serve to convince us of the truth of what *John* tells us, 1 *John* 5. 19. *That the whole world lyeth in wickedness*. For these Souls whom Christ judgeth and calleth the *fairest amongst Women*: The most lovely and beautiful Souls, are those who in the Eyes of the generality in the world are counted the most unlovely, despicable, and contemptible Persons in nature, in so much that Godly men and women may take up the words of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9. concerning himself and those of his own order, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9. *We think, that God hath set us forth as it were appointed unto death, for we are made* Use 1.

a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are *fools* for Christs sake, profane, lewd men they are wise, *we are weak*, they are strong, they are honourable, we are despised; the People of God, in the present age, in all former ages are they who hunger, and thirst, who are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, yet they labour, working with their hands, being reviled they bless, being persecuted they suffer it, being defamed they intreat, yet are they made as the filth of the world, as the off-scouring of all Nations even to this day. Thus it was under the Old Testament, the prophet complained in his time, *Isa.* 59. 15. *That truth failed, and he who departed from evil made himself a prey*, but he addeth, and *the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.* It was so under the New Testament; who was more despised, and rejected of men then Christ? Who was more reviled, contemned, abused both in words and deeds then *John the Baptist*, Christ, and his blessed Apostles, and all the Primitive Christians? Christ foretold his disciples, that the world should hate them, that they should speak of them all manner of Evil, persecute them, turn them out of their *Synagogues*, &c. It is so in our times, if there be in any places Persons fearing God, and working righteousness, Persons that make a conscience of their waies, that fear an Oath, that durst not drink, and swear, and curse, and blaspheme the living God, as others do, that make conscience of their worshipping God, and are a little more strict and frequent in it then others are. These are the Persons against whom the world spits all their venom, against whom their hands are lifted up, men may meet together to drink, and revel, to hear lewd and profane Songs, and Plays, but not to *pray*, not to consider and exhort one another to love, and to good works; what is this an Evidence of but that the *world lyeth in wickedness*? Christ judgeth pious Souls, the fairest Souls, these are they for whom he died. Whom he calls his Sister, his Spouse, the fairest Souls in the creation; these are those Souls, whom the World sets up as marks to shoot all their invenomed arrows, bitter words against, to offer all affronts, and indignities unto. Shall not the Lord visit for these things? Shall he not be avenged on such a generation? Shall a gallant in the World, draw his Sword upon the man that affronts his Paramour, or Mistress, a wanton Woman that he hath espoused, or

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to whom his heart cleaveth, and shall the Lord bear these affronts, these injuries offered to Souls that are more precious in the Eyes of their Lord then all the world is beside? Hear what the Lord said by his prophet as to that antient People of his, Isa. 43. 2, 3. *I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour, I gave* Egypt *for thy ransom*: Ethiopia *and* Seba *for thee. Since thou wert pretious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and People for thy life.* Was this spoken for the Jews only think we, or did this concern the profane part of the Jews, or those only that feared the Lord, walked in his commandments, and worshiped him in Spirit and in truth? That it was not to be understood with reference to or upon the account of the leud, and profane part of the Jewish Nation is evident, by Gods declared detestation of them by the same prophet, and by others of his Prophets. If it were spoken with reference to such as feared God, and walked in his commandments, and kept close to the rule of Worship which he had given them, it holds good still to all Souls that fall under that Character. They are precious in Gods sight, honourable, he hath loved them, the holy one of *Israel* is their Saviour, and the worlds hatred of them, profane mens reviling, contemning, abusing them, is but a continued Evidence, *that the world knoweth them not*, and speaketh evil of, and doth evil to things and Persons they know not: Or that it lieth in wickedness, in a vile and wicked Error of judgment, judging those vile, and base, whom God judgeth precious and honourable, and those worthy of hatred, whom he loveth, & though the Lord may for a time suffer his good & righteous Servants to be thus reviled, thus treated, thus abused, by leud and ungodly men, for the trial of their faith, and for the exercise of their patience, and that some of the blood of his Saints may be poured into the cup of wicked mens sins, that the cup of their iniquities may be full, and they may fill up their measures of sinning, That upon them may come all the righteous blood of his People, which hath been shed, yet be assured, the Lord will not suffer it alwaies, but awake as one out of sleep, & plead the cause of his People, and give *Egypt* for their ransom and *Ethiopia* and *Seba*, and they will find at last, that God will give men for them, and People for their lives. Possibly some will say to us, but how shall we know these whom Christ calls

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the fairest amongst women, if we knew them, we should give a due respect to them. It is true the Apostle saith, *The world knoweth us not.* Nor can they perfectly know them, for the *Kings Daughter is glorious within*, saith the *Psalmist.* But yet our Saviour tells you, *Math.* 7. 16. *By their fruits you shall know them, do men gather grapes of Thorns; or Figs of Thistles? even so every good tree, bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.* Will you know what is good fruit? see *Gal.* 5. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit, is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against these there is no law*; No law of God. Add to this, *Phil.* 3. 3. *We are the circumcision, which Worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh*; these are the true *Jews*, that are such *inwardly, in the heart, and in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.* See you therefore any man, or woman, or any party of men and women in the World, who *disclaiming any confidence in the flesh*, any priviledges of *birth*, or *Church-state*, or the *merits of any works they have done*, or can do, place their hope for Salvation in Jesus Christ alone, trust in him, *rejoyce in him* and *Worship God* in *the Spirit*, (tho it may be not with those external rites, and Ceremonies that you do, nor under the same circumstances, yet) heartily Worship God, according to the rules which God hath given them, that Love God, and have a love to all men, though more especially to those that fear God, and desire to live in Peace (as much as in them lyes) with all men, that are *gentle* and *meek*, not giving way to rude, and boisterous Passions, that are good in their behaviours, *temperate*, no *drunkards*, no *unclean Persons*, but squaring their lives by the *rule of reason*, because it is also the law of God. Let me tell you, that *against these there is no law.* No law of God, which is the *regula regulans* the rule by which all the rules, and laws of men must be guided, or they are nullities and no rules at all. These are those whom that God, whom you own as your Creator, and the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Christ, whom you call your Redeemer, your Saviour, and who most certainly shall be your Judge, and give unto you at the last according to what you have done in the flesh, calls the *fairest amongst women*, the most beautiful and lovely Souls in the whole creation, judge you, whether you ought not so also to call, so to account them, so to deal with them. These are the best men and women in your Cities, Parishes, *&c.* Take heed of using *hard Speeches* concerning them, God will for them

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more to Judgment as well as for ungodly deeds, much more take heed of any *hard actions* against them; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of Gods Eye, *Zech.* 2. 8. *Deut.* 32. 10. They have prayed with *David*, *Psal.* 17. 8. *Keep me as the apple of thine Eye.* God hath said concerning them, *Zech.* 2. 8. *He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of his Eye.* Be wise now therefore O ye Princes, be instructed, O you men of the Earth, whether great or small, be assured Christ will revenge his Spouses quarrels, even the quarrels of all those whom he judgeth the *fairest amongst women.* Let none think to cover their malice against Religion, and Godliness, under pretences of executing *humane Laws*; the *Apostle* saith *against* such is no law, no law that will be justified by the law of God, no law that will justify either the *lawgivers* in making it, or the Executors in execution of it, 1 *Tim* 1. 9. *The law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless, and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for unholy, and profane, for Murderers of Fathers, and Murderers of Mothers, for Whoremongers, for those who defile themselves with mankind, for Man-Stealers, for Lyars, for perjured Persons, and other things contrary to sound Doctrine.* The *law* [*that is, the law of God*] [*is not made for them*] that is, to punish, afflict, torment them, it is made for them to live according to the rule of it. It is made to *protect them. For rulers are not a terror to good works but the evil, Rom.* 13. 3. And all Magistrats ought to be Ministers of God to Christians for good, *Rom.* 13. 4. Now all humane laws must be either in *affirmance of the law of God*, and to force that, or in *civil things left to their power*, as they shall judge to be most for the publick Peace, or necessary to uphold Nations, and Polities. O therefore take heed what you do, lest you be found *fighters against God.* Much less let any think to cover their malice with pretences, that the Persons they run upon with such a rage are *hypocrites.* Hypocrisy can be but in the heart when there is no contradiction in the conversation, that man is no judge of. But is it not possible to reconcile (at least) some part of the men of the World to those to whom the Lord Jesus Christ hath given such a Character? Is he not a better Judge then men are? Will you make your selves believe, for a cloak for your rage) that these men are not what they pretend to be? I would ask you but one question, are they not more righteous then you? Are they not more in *reading the Word, Hearing, Prayer, Fasting*, and are not these things duties commanded in that Word, which you own to be your rule, *and to be holy, just* and good? are

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they not ſtricter in the *obſervation of Sabbaths*? (Which is ſo great a piece of Religion that the Prophet expreſſeth a great part of it, under that notion, *Iſa.* 56. 4, 6.) Into their hearts you cannot look, but their Words are audible, do not they fear an Oath more? Do they ſwear and curſe, and Blaſpheme like you or many others? do they exceed Heathens, *Dii omnes deæq; te perdant*; by their *Dammees*, do they rail and revile, and lye like other men? Do they drink, and whore, ſteal and murder, gripe and oppreſs? is not the contrary to this the beauty of a Soul in the Eye of humane reaſon? You have therefore no reaſon to judge them none of thoſe whom Chriſt calls the *faireſt amongſt women*, you muſt own they are fairer then you, or any of your converſe, and ſtamp. You muſt find ſome in the World that are better then your ſelves, or they muſt be the moſt comely and beautiful Souls. Sirs I beſeech you conſider, how much it becometh a man as a man to judge according to truth? And what can be a better ſtandard then the judgment of Chriſt. O let not the People of God be vile in your Eyes who are ſo highly eſteemed by him who is your Lord and Maſter, and by whom you pretend to hope to be ſaved. But to ſhut up this diſcourſe; You that will not conform your judgment to the Judgment of Chriſt concerning ſuch People, and behave your ſelves towards them accordingly, ſhall certainly be forced to ſubmit to his *Judgment* ſpoken of, *Jude* 14. and 15.

2d *Branch.* I would willingly improve this notion a little further, not onely to reconcile, your judgments to the judgment of Chriſt concerning the People of God, *but to reconcile you alſo to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the ways of God*, The effecting of the former, (if I could do it) though it might produce ſome more quiet and peace in the World and reduce men to the rule of reaſon, yet as to your own Souls (if that be all) all the effect it would have would be to ſave you from a deeper place in Hell. It is not a good opinion of Gods People, or a peaceable or kind behaviour to them, will bring any man to Heaven. I could wiſh that all who hear me this day (to uſe Saint *Paul's* words to *Agrippa*) were as the People of God are, (excepting that reproach and obloquy which they ſuffer, thoſe bonds, and impriſonments to which they are expoſed) that they alſo would come into the number of thoſe whom the Lord judgeth the beſt Souls in the World, the *faireſt amongſt women*.

1. *Is it nothing to you to come into this reputation?* Lewd, profane, debaucht

vaticht Persons, let their quality in the World be what it will, in Scripture come under the notions of *Children of Belial, Vain Persons.* What an object of desire doth corporeal beauty appear to the World? What will not a vain woman do to get it, to preserve it, to dissemble it, what time, what mony she spends to set it out? What care she takes, if as to it she be under any defects, to hide them, to correct them, &c. *Quantum est in rebus inane?* All this it may be is spent in painting a Sepulcher, a rotten post. Possibly look into this *Masquerade*, there's nothing but what is rational filthiness, and deformity. An *understanding* void of any valuable knowledge. A *Perverse* and *stubborn will* against what is rationally good, *beastly affections*, her Soul it may be is full of lasciviousness, *Pride*, Malice, Envy: All unlovely things, *Turbulent Passions.* Is *Spiritual beauty worth nothing?* Shall Heathens judge a *Soul* that is *knowing*, subdued to the rule of reason, *chast*, *good*, *just*, *sober*, meek, modest, beautiful, and worth a thousand Souls otherwise disposed, and qualified; and shall Christians judge otherwise? shall they think Soul-beauty not valuable? Or shall they not judge it worth any thing, to be *comely* with *Christs comeliness*, and in the Eyes of an all seeing, heart searching God, to be without spot or wrinkle; consider Sirs, how much this is beneath the name or profession of Christians, how we are condemned by wanton gallants desiring *corporeal beauty*, and Heathens, valuing the rational beauty of the mind which commends it self to all rational minds before they be debauched.

2. Consider *what it is to have the King of Kings* to *desire*, and to *predicate our beauty*, Psal. 45. 11. *So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.* The King, this *King* is God whose throne is for ever, and ever, and whose Scepter is a righteous Scepter, *v.* 6. Beauty is in it self attractive but who is there that will not covet a beauty, that a *King* should desire? But what are all the Kings of the Earth, compared with him who is the *King of glory? So shall the King* (saith the Psalmist *desire thy beauty*: How great a thing is this for the great God to have a desire to the Sons of men and a delight in them? And further for this King to predicate our beauty, as the Lord doth in the Text, and did concerning *Job*, *Job* 2. v. 3. *And the Lord said unto Satan, hast thou considered my Servant* Job, *that there is none like him in all the Earth, a perfect, and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil, and still he holdeth fast his integrity, though thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause.* For this great *King* to desire a Souls beauty, signifieth to be

the Spouse of Christ, to be in *favour with God* in this life, and it promiseth an eternal communion with God in glory, in the life which is to come, when the Marriage of the Lamb shall be consummate, and the *Bride* the Lambs Wife, shal follow him whereſoever he goes.

3. Lastly consider, The *consequent* of not being of the number of those, whom Christ here calleth *the faireſt amongſt Women*. Amongst men their is a *medium* betwixt mens looking upon a *woman* as the faireſt, and such a one whose beauty they desire; and being *abominable*, and odious in their Eyes. But as to Christ there is no *medium* betwixt these two. The *unbelieving* and the *abominable* are put together, *Rev.* 21. 8. A man may not love a woman so well as to make her his Wife, and yet have a kindness for her, not hate, and abhor her. The case is not so betwixt God, and the Soul. He or she whose beauty the Lord doth not desire, is by God hated and abhorred, that Soul is *abominable* in his sight. The *abominable*, Rev. 21. 8. shall *have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the Second death*. These arguments are enough to those who believe there is an Heaven, and an Hell, who believe there is a God, and a Christ and that all mankind are under the favour, or disfavour of this great and terrible God. To perſuade them to get into the number of these whom God judgeth the *faireſt amongſt women*. Will any say to *me but what can we contribute towards* it? *Love* is a free thing. It is true Love is free, and the Love of none amongst the creatures is or can be so free as the Love of God, who is the freest Agent; but yet hearken to the direction of the *Psalmist* who doubtless is an infallible guide in this matter, *Psal.* 45. *v.* 10. *Hearken O Daughter, and consider*, and *incline thine Ear*: forget *also thine own People and thy Fathers house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty*. What is our *Fathers* house, but the house of old *Adam*? What are our own *People*, but our own sinful courses? our old *sinful company*? How shall we forget them but by *hearkening* to the Counsels of God, *considering* our state and condition what we are? Whither we are hastening, what will become of us in the latter end? *Giving* and *inclining* our Ears, to what? To the reproofs, corrections, admonitions, instructions, of Gods Word, to the knockings and motions of his blessed Spirit, so shall the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, desire and greatly desire your beauty. To those who what ever they are called, and go for in the World, are Atheists in heart, and believe nothing which

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the Scripture saith of Heaven, or Hell, and a World to come, nothing of God, or Christ, nothing that for any other can say will be enough God, must perswade *Japhet to come & dwell in the tents of Sem.*

3d *Branch.* I shall shut up this discourse with two or three Words of Exhortation to such as this blessed Bridegroom dignifieth with this honourable compellation of *the fairest amongst women.*

1. First *let every such Soul be in some measure reconciled to itself.* There is a great difference betwixt Christs apprehension of many a pious Soul, and its own apprehension of it self. There is none so high in the Eyes of Christ, none oft times so low in its own Eyes, as the believing Soul is. *Paul* calls himself *the greatest of sinners, and the least of Saints. David* calls himself *a worm, and no man, Psal.* 22. Yea and I shall by and by shew you that low and mean apprehensions of our selves are a great part of our duty, much of our *beauty.* Yet there may be an extream in these apprehensions. If these apprehensions hinder our *faith in Christ, our chearfull and comfortable walking before God,* our chearful looking up to God and calling him Father, and coming with boldness to the throne of grace, they are so far from a Christians duty, that they are his sinful failings. It is too ordinary amongst Christians, to take so much shame to themselves that they know not how to give glory to God, the glory of their being what they are (to use Saint *Pauls* phrase.) Thou hast Christian, many failings and infirmities, thou seest much naughtiness, and corruption in thine heart. What then? though thou beest not the fairest amongst the *glorious Angels and glorified Saints;* Yet thou mayest be one of the *fairest amongst women,* the glorified Saints have no spot, in their garments, no ill lineaments in their faces, thou hast some, but so have all that are on this side of the blessed mansions. Thy spots may be no more then the spots of Gods Children and if they be not thou mayest be one of the *fairest amongst women.*

2. *Let every believing Soul learn hence to be humble.* That they are the fairest, some of the fairest amongst Souls yet on this side Heaven, this indeed is matter of glorying, and rejoicing. But then to consider, that this is not their *native complexion,* but an *adventitious beauty,* that it is not an *artificial* but a *created beauty.* This though it doth not take away all glorying, all boasting from them, yet it restraineth them in their *boasting and glorying* to make their boast and to glory onely in the Lord, if they look to the rock out of which they were hewed, to the hole of the Pit from which they were digged, they will find they derived not their beauty from thence, they

were in the quarry as unlovely rude stones as any others; it is the Lord that hath hewed them out, that hath polished them and of grace hath superinduced that beauty upon them wherein they glory, and if they have received their beauty they have no reason to glory as if they had not received it. I say he that considereth this, and that now at the best he is not without spots, his beauty is not perfect, at least that part of his beauty which is inherent in him is not perfect, this will shew a thinking Christian eternal cause to walk softly towards men, and humbly as well as thankfully toward God. Grace leaves no room for, giveth no advantage unto pride; hence though a believer most excelleth all other Souls, yet he ordinarily least excelleth them in his own apprehensions.

3. *Let this engage every believer to high admiring thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Christ in this Text calls his Spouse the *fairest amongst women*; you will find she requireth him, *Chap.* 5. 10. *My beloved* is white and *ruddy, the chiefest amongst ten thousand.* And certainly we have all the reason imaginable constraining us to this admiration of Christ, we were by birth *Ethiopians*, Our Father was a *Syrian*, consider us in our selves, as separate from Christs comeliness put upon us. We are altogether black, he is all glory, all beauty, *altogether desires* (as the Spouse expresseth it) Christ is to be admired of all them that believe, we should never think of Christ, but with admiring thoughts, never solemnly discourse of him but in forms of admiration. If Christ can see so much beauty in us who are poor creatures, poor worms of the Earth, who have no beauty but what he hath put upon us, and into us, certainly we must be very blind if we can see no beauty, no lovelineſs, nothing to be desired in him, who is the bright Image of his Fathers *glory*, and the expreſs Image of his Person, whom all the *Angels*, adore, and admire, and in whom the Soul of the everlasting Father resteth, and is well pleased, and who is his great delight.

4. Lastly, Hath Christ stiled the believing Soul *the fairest amongst women? How do all such Souls stand concerned to preserve their beauty?* Your beauty is your *holiness*, the favour of God, your acceptableness to him and his love towards you. The state of Justification indeed cannot be lost, the seed of God doth, and shall abide in the Soul. But yet your luster may be lost, his manifestative love to you may be withdrawn, your honour in the World may be lost. You may walk like one covered, beside the flocks of those who are the companions of Christ. Is the vain woman so curiously careful to

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preserve her beauty, that she will spare any time, any mony for it? will she avoid any thing that may be a stain in it? How shall she rise up in Judgment against the loose careless, and negligent Christian, that doth not through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, that doth not wash himself continually in the tears of repentance and beg the daily imputation of Christs righteousness to cover his new appearing nakedness? That in his converse with the World, doth not set a strict watch over his heart, at the doors of his lips upon all his converse with men, lest he should receive any impression from the dirty World, in which he lives, which may be a blot upon his beauty, in the Eyes of an holy God or in the Eyes of holy men. But I have spoken enough to this *Proposition* raised from the *compellation, O thou fairest amongst women.*

Sermon XLV.

Cant. 1. 8.

If thou knowest not (O thou fairest amongst Women) Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids by the Shepherds Tents.

MY business in my last exercise was to shew you the nature of her beauty, whom the blessed *lover* here calls *the fairest amongst Women.* I shall at this time shew you a *Spot* in her *beauty* from the *Supposition* in the Text, *If thou knowest not.* It is true that Suppositions neither in holy Writ, nor in our Idiom, do not alwaies contain positions of undoubted truth. Sometimes things that are impossible, or absurd, and false, are supposed in order to the forming of a true conclusion. But in the Text it is certain that it doth. Our Lord in saying *If thou knowest not,* Supposeth, that the *Spouse might not know,* and therefore he directeth her in the latter part of the Text. It is certain, that the term *know* in Scripture doth not alwaies signify the comprehending the thing spoken of in our understanding, it sometimes

times signifieth *to approve*, sometimes, to *attend* to what we know, sometimes to *Experience*. I take here the first and most natural signification of the term to be the Sense. *If If thou knowest not*, that is, *if thou beest ignorant*. If thou beest at a loss. At a *loss for what?* I told you that to perfect the Sense we must supply something from the foregoing verse from the matter of the Spouses Petition. She had desired him to tell her *where he fed his flock, where he made them to rest at noon*. Where she might have the best, freest, and least interrupted fellowship and communion with him, especially in a time of great distress, and affliction. To this he answereth, *O thou fairest amongst Women? If thou knowest not* (that is) *if thou knowest not where I feed my flocks, nor where I make them to rest at noon. Go thy way, &c.* The words might lead me to a more general discourse of the imperfection of a believers state in this life, Or to a more particular discourse concerning those *grains* of *ignorance* which may be allowed a gracious Soul. But as the first is too general, so the latter is too hard a task until the world, be better agreed then it yet is, about the number of *fundamental truths*, necessary to be known, and believed in order to Eternal life, and Salvation. Besides I think my Text considered as an answer to the preceding petition, guides me to another thing. The Spouses request was, to be instructed how she might enjoy, a full and free communion with her Lord especially in a time of trial and distress with reference to this petition; her Lord answereth her, *If thou knowest not*; Supposing she might as to this at some times be ignorant, and at a loss; The Proposition is plain:

Prop. *That even the best of Gods People (the fairest amongst Women) may sometimes be at a great loss where, and how to maintain their desired communion with Christ.*

I shall open the Proposition in three conclusions. Then confirm and apply it.

1. *The Souls communion with Christ lyes in their reciprocal communications of themselves each to other.* All communion is made up of a mutual communication of two or more Persons. I have discoursed the nature of communion largely in some of my former discourses and therefore shall say little of it now. Onely I say all communion lyes in a mutual and reciprocal communication. Thus two friends have communion each with

with other by frequent meetings together, mutual discourses, and communications of the Secrets of each others hearts, one to another. The Subjects in this communion are Souls clothed with bodies, and their communion is bodily. But now the Soul considered with Christ, as its correlate in this communion, are *Spirits*, and their communion is more Spiritual. The Soul performeth its part in it by the secret exercise of the powers God hath given it upon Christ as the object. By Spiritual Meditations, the exercise of *faith*, love, hope, desire, joy and delight, *&c.* By giving up its will to his will, assenting to what he dictateth in his word, consenting to what he there commandeth, *&c.* Christ communicates himself to the Soul by the secret influences of his Spirit, opening and inlightening the understanding, bowing, and inclining the will, influencing the affections, convincing, strengthening, quickening, comforting the Soul. Indeed there is a more external communion with God, but separated from this it signifieth nothing to the Souls advantage; so we are said to have communion with God, in reading, and hearing his word, praying, receiving the Sacraments, the Soul hath in these no further fellowship & communion with God, then it in them exerciseth these more inward powers in more external acts by the advantage of the bodily members; so far as it poureth out itself to God, in prayer by the words of the lips, or opens its heart to God in hearing the word, receiveth it with *faith* and love, and meekness, *&c.* So far and no further, hath the Soul in these duties any communion with God. Nor doth God communicate himself to the Soul that is not made to believe and obey what it heareth further then to let it know his will with the advantage of such arguments as his Ministers are inabled to use by vertue of those gifts which he hath given them to fit them for their ministration.

2. *There can be no union between Christ, and that Soul, with whom Christ hath not a constant communion*, communion is the Daughter of union, according to the nature of the union. Wherever *communion* wholly ceaseth, the union is dissolved. Indeed where the *communion is voluntary* (not from a natural cause) there may be great differences in the degrees of it, but wholly interrupted it cannot be; hence God and Christ have a constant communion with the believing Soul, this is by the Spirit of God given to them, and dwelling, and working in them, and the

seed

seed of God abiding in them. Our union with Christ is preserved by the same means by which it was at first made, which was by Gods first communication of his power and goodness to the Soul, and the Souls communication of itself by faith to him. Thus the *Union* was first made between God, and the Soul, thus it is, and must be maintained, and upheld. The reason why we say the Soul once in a state of grace cannot fall from it, either *finally*, or *totally*, is not from the *ability, and certainty of their own wills*, however renewed, and sanctified, but from the more constant, and certain influences of the Spirit of Grace, which is given to the Soul, dwelleth in it, and worketh in it; Christ hath not only promised to come to them that love him, and keep his Commandments, but to make his abode with him, hence the union between Christ, & the Soul, is not only compared to the *moral union* between the *Husband and Wife*, *Eph.* 5. 30. but to the *natural union* between the *Vine* and the *Branches*, *John* 15. 1. betwixt which (while they remain united) there is a constant communication, and in very deed did not the Soul of a believer daily receive divine influences and communications, it must *wither*, and *die* as naturally, as the Branch doth, when the union is broken betwixt it and the Vine, and this our Saviour teacheth us, *John* 15. 4. *As the Branch cannot bring forth fruit, unless it abideth in the Vine, so no more can you, except you abide in me.*

3. *Although the Souls communion with Christ can never be wholly interrupted, and broken, yet it may be more or less, and sometimes indiscerned by the Soul.* I say it may be *more* or *less*. God may more, or less communicate himself to the Soul, as to his influences of *strengthening, quickning, comforting grace*, and the Soul that moveth from these principles, may be able, more or less to *communicate itself to God* in the exercises of *meditation*, faith, joy, and delight in God. Nay, sometimes Gods influences may be so secret, and indiscernable, that the Soul may cry out as one forsaken of God, and a stranger to him. This hath so plentiful an evidence in Holy Writ, as the truth of it cannot be disputed. We find *David*, *Psal.* 22. 1. crying out, *My God! my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring*, and the Psalmist, *Psal.* 77. 3. *I remembred God, and was troubled.* v. 4. *—I am so troubled, that I cannot speak.* v. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath*

he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies? There are many inſtances of this nature in the *Pſalms*, we have an inſtance in this Song, *Cant.* 5. 1, 2. *By night upon my Bed, I ſought him whom my Soul loveth, I ſought him, but I found him not.* v. 2. *I will riſe now, and go about the City, in the ſtreets, and in the broad places, I will ſeek him whom my Soul loveth, I ſought him, but I found him not.* v. 3. *The Watchmen that go about the City, found me, to whom I ſaid, ſaw ye him whom my Soul loveth.* So Cant. 5. 5. *I roſe up to open to my Beloved, and my Hands dropped with Myrrh, and my Fingers with ſweet ſmelling Myrrh upon the Handles of the lock, I opened to my Beloved, but he had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone, my Soul failed when he ſpake, I ſought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no anſwer.* What do all theſe metaphorical expreſſions purport? but this, that there are times when the Soul finds a difficulty to maintain, or diſcern its communion with God.

Sometimes God doth not as at other times breath upon, & communicate himſelf to the Souls, even of the beſt of his people, the faileur ſeemeth to be on Gods part, for ſome juſt cauſe, the Soul findeth ſome freedom to impart, and communicate its ſelf to God, but findeth not Gods aſſiſtances, influences, and communications of himſelf to it, as it deſireth, and as it hath experienced from God at other times; this looks like the caſe of the Spouſe in thoſe two places of this Song before mentioned.

Sometimes again the Soul eaſily diſcerneth the faileur in itſelf, it cannot *meditate* upon God. It remembreth God, and is troubled, it cannot pray with any fervour, nor exerciſe faith with any boldneſs; this ſeems to be the caſe of the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 77. That the thing is ſo evident, let me therefore rather ſpend time to ſearch out the reaſons of ſuch a diſpenſation on Gods part, and affliction on ours.

1. *On Gods part* we uſually call ſuch a *diſpenſation a deſertion*, ſo as the cauſe of it is the withdrawing of ſome divine influences from the Soul. It was truly ſaid of *Auguſtine*, *Deus non deſerit etiamſi deſerere videatur.* Though God ſeemeth to forſake, yet he never wholly forſaketh any Soul to whom he is united, it is the withdrawing only of ſome ſenſible manifeſtations of his love. All divine deſertions are either founded in Divine Juſtice, or in the *Divine Wiſdom*, ſo as the account which can be given of any ſuch *diſpenſation* on Gods part, muſt fall under one of thoſe two heads.

1. When it is founded in *Justice*, it alwaies is for the *punishment of sin*. For though God upon the Covenant of Grace hath reserved no liberty to himself eternally to forsake his people, no nor yet *totally*, yet he hath reserved to himself a liberty for temporary afflictions of them; you have (as to this particular) a fair copy of the Covenant of grace, *Psal.* 89. 26. 27, *&c.* The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ from Eternity, the tenour of it was revealed variously, to *Adam* upon the Fall, to *Noah*, to *Abraham*, to *David*; in that Psalm you have the revelation of it to *David*, v. 20. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. *He shall cry unto me; thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my Salvation. Also I will make him my first born, higher then the Kings of the Earth.* v. 28. *My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my Covenant shall stand fast with him. His Seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the days of Heaven.* As this Covenant was made with *Abraham* and his Seed, *I am thy God, and the God of thy Seed, Gen.* 17. So in the further revelation of it to *David*, it is declared to relate to *him and his Seed*. Now followeth *v.* 30. *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments*: That is, if they sin against me, (for all those phrases do but express sin) then *v.* 32. *Will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* God you see hath reserved to himself upon his Covenant of Grace with his People, a liberty to visit *their transgression with the Rod; and their iniquity with stripes*, but no liberty *utterly to take away his loving kindness* from them: Afflictions (which are there call'd a *visitation with rods and stripes*) either respect the outward, or the inward man: Those which relate to the outward man, are diseases, pains, persecutions, *&c.* Those which relate to the inward man, are *desertions*, and *temptations*, which God permitteth, though himself moveth none to Evil. *Desertions* are either *total*, or *partial*; as to the former God hath foreclosed himself by the *Covenant of Grace*, in which he hath said, *He will never leave his People, nor forsake them. His loving kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail*, Psal. 89. 33. *Partial desertions* therefore are the only *rod*, the only *stripes* which God hath

hath reserved to punish his people with (as to their inward man) *who break his Statutes, and keep not his Commandments*, these must be the withdrawings of some *manifestations of his love*, which are promised to those *who love him, and keep his Commandments*. Hence it is, that as *Sampson* found the continuing influence of God upon him (as to his bodily strength) while he kept his *vow* and *covenant* with God as a *Nazarite*, yet when he had betrayed himself to *Dalilah*, and she had shaved off his locks, he discerned that *God was departed from him*, and he had not strength to do, as at other times, whatever he resolved: so when the Soul that found in itself a strength before sufficient to grapple with its temptations, and to perform the several duties and operations of a Spiritual life, hath suffered itself to be overcome with motions; and temptations to sin, it finds itself weak, falls before a temptation, fails in its Spiritual duties, it cannot believe, hope, meditate, rejoice, and delight in God, *&c.* Thus it was with *Peter*, that had *faith* enough to walk upon the Sea at Christs command, when he had sinned by too much confidence in himself, he falls by the hand of a silly Damsel in the High Priests Hall, hence it is oft-times, that the liveliness, and chearfulness of the Soul in its conversation also fails, and it is at a loss where to find its beloved, and how to enjoy its desired communion with him.

2. Sometimes these dispensations are not so much founded in the Divine Justice, and intended as the punishment of guilt in the Soul, as in the *Divine Wisdom* designing to *prove*, and *to try his People, and to make them to seek more after him*. *Job* was thus tried. Though *Job* doubtless had guilt enough of sin to have justified God in such providences, yet God himself saith of him, *Job* 2. 3. *That there was none like him in the Earth, that he was a perfect, and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil*, yet had he not been under some *divine desertion, and withdrawings of grace*, as well as more external Trials, he had never fallen into those extravagant passions in which you find him, *ch.* 3, *&c.*

3. *On our part this loss and ignorance* happeneth divers ways. I shall instance in some more principal causes.

1. *The prevailing of sin and corruption in the Soul.* The guilt of sin alwaies causeth *weakness* and *blindness*. *How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord, seeing thou doest all these things*, Ezech. 16 30. *Weakness is the cause of sin*, and it is the *effect* of sin, it argueth

weakness in a Soul to do those things which God hath forbidden, and which will certainly end in the harm of the Soul. It is a weak thing wilfully to sin against God, and *weakness* is also the *effect of sin*, this is caused from the sour reflections, and reverberations of conscience, when a man would meditate on God, believe, and hope, joy, rejoice, and delight in God, conscience throws his sin in his face, and bringeth his iniquity to remembrance, he remembreth God, and is troubled, he cannot tell how to believe, how to hope, how to joy, and rejoice in God, whom he now looketh upon as angry with him; for the proof of this (though I might fetch enough from *Davids* Pœnitential *Psalms*) yet I need no more then the experience of every good Christian, who keepeth any watch upon his own heart and ways. I appeal to any of your Souls, when you are conscious of any wilful slips, and failings in your life, can you remember, and think of God as at other times? Can you believe, and hope in his mercy; Can you pray with that boldness, and courage, and confidence, doth not shame cover your faces, so as you know not how to look upward?

2. *Diabolical suggestions* are another cause; what strange and horrid impressions do the best of Gods people find? some indeed of more strength, and longer continuance then others, but there is scarce any who doth not find them at some times, and in some degree, or other, and although if they be mere impressions, not consented to by the Soul, but abhorred by it, they are not the Souls guilt, yet they must be the Souls disturbance, so as under them the Soul will not know how to uphold, and maintain a communion with God as at other times, but its communion is broken, and interrupted, and imperfect; though the Devil cannot stain the Soul without its own concurrence, yet he can trouble the Soul, if God permits him, by his mere suggestions, and impressions, and therefore we had need pray every day, *Lead us not into temptation*. The Devil in this case can do as much to a Soul, as a clamorous railing fellow can do to disturb our communion with our friends, though we hearken not much to him, and chide him away, yet he can make a noise, and disturb our communion.

3. *Severe outward afflictions may be a cause*. Though afflictions be not alwaies indications of Divine Wrath, (for the Apostle tells us, that *whom he loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Child whom*

whom he receiveth) yet oftentimes they are so, and whether Gods end be to punish sin, or no, yet there is no Soul but is conscious of so much daily guilt, as gives him cause to suspect, they are the punishments of some guilt; and I told you before how apprehensions of guilt, very ordinarily make the Soul at a loss how to uphold, and maintain its wonted communion with God. Besides *afflictions* usually excite *passions*, particularly those of *fear* and *sorrow*; Both opposite to the exercises of *faith* and *joy*, and *delight* in God, both distracting the Soul in the *sweet meditations* of God. To this may be added, that the Soul in afflictions, as it standeth in more need of the divine presence, and influence, so it is prone to expect more, or to think it hath nothing. Neither can the Soul under the roilings, and prevailings of passion so well discern Christs communications of himself unto it; and besides, they hinder the Soul in its motions, and communications of it self to Christ. *I am so troubled* (saith the *Psalmist*) *that I cannot Speak.* The Soul is so troubled, that it cannot believe, it cannot hope, it cannot Pray, *&c.*

4. The last cause that I shall assign is *distractions*, caused either from *worldly cares* and *businesses*, or from *some false guides*. A Soul overwhelmed with businesses and cares of the World, will many times find it self at a loss how to maintain its communion with God, there is such an opposition betwixt a *communion with God*, and *the World*, the first being wholly a Spiritual thing, the other wholly of the Earth, earthly, that a man overwhelmed in the World will find the maintaining of this communion difficult, and be more at a loss to it, then another man more free from these incumbrances. Besides, in the World Christians are subject to *distractions* from *false guides*; one saying *loe Christ is here*; another saying, *loe he is there*; one telling us that the way to have communion with Christ is to cast off *duties*, and *ordinances*; another prescribing an attendance upon them as the onely means of such communion: One telling them that there is no other communion with Christ then with *Christ mystical*, having and keeping in the *communion of his Church*, whereas many may do so (if we mean the visible Church) that have no communion with Christ at all. Upon Christs *floor* there is *Chaff* as well as *Wheat*, which when Christ cometh with his fan thoroughly to purge his floor, shall be cast into unquenchable fire; *tares*, as well as *wheat*, which must grow together untill the Harvest, but then the *Son of man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom, all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace*

furnace of fire, where shall be wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Matth. 13. 40, 41, 42. Some telling them, that there is no communion with Christ, but *by joining with the Prayers of the Church,* and receiving the Sacrament with the Church, as if an external communion with Christ, (which *Judas* a Son of perdition had) were all, that men and women need look after. These different notions, and instructions sometimes puzzle the minds of Gods own People and make them to be at a great loss. I now come to the Application.

Use 1. This in the first Place lets us see what a perpetual use, and need there will be of an *able standing Gospel Ministry* and the goodness of God, in providing such an ordinance for his Church. The interest of Souls lyeth in two things. 1. *In an union with Christ, and reconciliation to God.* 2. *In a fellowship and communion with him.* The Ministry of the Gospel is, and will be useful to the end of the World on both these accounts. 1. For procuring, & promoving Souls reconciliation to God, and union with Christ 2, *Cor.* 5. 20. *Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christs stead be you reconciled to God.* So long as there are any sinners in the World, any Souls in such a state, as living and dying in it, they cannot be saved: So long will be need of *Gospel Ministers*, and such too as are both able, and faithful. There are some in the World that think a *Conversion to an opinion,* from *Paganism* to the outward profession of Christ, is all the *Conversion* necessary, and *Baptism* all the *regeneration* necessary (according to whose Doctrine all Drunkards, Whoremongers, Men-stealers, Lyers, Thieves, Extortioners, Covetous Persons, Sorcerers, if *Baptized* must be saved, (directly contrary, to what the Apostle affirms) these indeed may think the Ministry of the Gospel needless, Preaching needless amongst Christians, and only of use amongst Heathens or count no more need of Ministers, then of *Philosophers* from *Athens,* to read men lectures of a good life, and any Ministers, any kind of Preaching will serve the turn; A lecture out of *Aristotle* or *Plato* is as good a Sermon as they see any need of But those who will believe what *Paul* saith, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. That there are multitudes amongst Baptized Persons, not reconciled to God, and who shall never come into Heaven, which is confirmed also by Saint *John, Rev.* 21. 8. They must see a need of this Ordinance, and acknowledge the great mercy in this gift to the *Church.* 2. Nay indeed this Doctrine may convince you, That if all within the Church, were Christians, not in name onely but indeed, *washed with the blood of Christ,*

Justified

Justified and *Sanctified*, yet there would be need of such an Ordinance. For the best of Christians are oft times at loss how to uphold, & maintain their communion with Christ. Here now lyeth the work of the Ministry of the Gospel, as the hand in the way to direct Christians which way to go, that they may come to the journies end which they aim at, the end of their hopes, and the Salvation of their Souls. This was the end of Christs institution of them, *Eph.* 4. 12. *For the perfecting of the Saints --- for the edifying the body of Christ.* If there be such a thing as Christians *fellowship* and *communion with Christ*, if they may be, and often are at loss, how to *maintain this communion*, they had need of some to be *helpers of their faith*, and of *their joy*. Which is the Notion of Ministers given by the *Apostle*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 14. Yea and they had need be *able Ministers too*. How various are the cases of Christians, how different one from another? This work is to be done *publickly* which indeed serveth for the most of Christians, and *privately* also, for those who cannot receive Satisfaction from publick instructions. Alas who is sufficient for these things? and how slighty a business is ordinarily made of the greatest work, the most weighty imployment under Heaven? How many *watchmen* are there that like those mentioned in the 3d Chapter of this Song? When the Spouse of Christ comes to them complaining, as *v.* 6. That *her beloved hath withdrawn himself, and is gone*, when their *Souls fail*, when they come and tell them, *that they have sought their beloved, and cannot find him, they have called, but he hath given them no answer*, instead of relieving of them, *they smite them, & wound them, & take away their vails from them*, they wound them with cruel and envenomed Words, mock and jeer, and revile them, and know not how to *speak a word to the weary*, (indeed not understanding what a wearied Soul means) the most they are able to say is, *what is thy beloved more then anothers beloved?* The Lord pity his flock and give them *Pastors according to his own heart, who can feed them with wisdom, and understanding*, and will be faithful in doing of it, men *to whom the Lord* God hath given the tongue of the learned, that they may speak a Word in season to those that are weary, as he promised, *Isaiah.* 50. 4. There are no more pestilent enemies to the People of God, then those that would have the flock of Christ, without *Shepherds*, or (which it may be is worse) Supplied with *Idol Shepherds* (as the Prophet calls them, *Zech.* 11. 17. And indeed are like Idols that *have Eyes and see not, Ears and hear not*, the name of *Shepherds*, but nothing of the *skill* and faithfulness required in such a place.

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Use 2. This Notion (Secondly) *may give some relief to Souls, whose condition this may be.* Here may be some before the Lord this day, who are crying out, *where is my God become?* Lord when wilt thou strengthen me? Quicken me? Comfort me? I confess the case of these Christians is sad, communion with Christ is the life of a good Christians life. All the comfort, and Satisfaction of his life is bound up in this one thing, let him want this he wants all, if he be at a loss as to this, he is quite lost; this is that which differenceth the true Child of God from an Hypocrite; the profane man lives without a God in the World, all talk of communion with God is but canting, the thing it self a *Chimera.* The Hypocrites ends cannot be obtained by this course of life he taketh up with meer external acts of communion, never regarding whether he hath any communion with God, in, and by those acts, he can live without any presence of God, without any influence of God upon his Soul: A Child of God cannot, if he wanteth communion with God, he calls all into question, doubteth of his union, and whether he hath not been all this while mistaken, whether his Soul be yet actually reconciled, and at Peace with God. All that can be said to relieve the Child of God under this complaint, to ease him under this burden, is this; That this misery which befalleth him, is but what is common to the very best of men, it is a priviledge reserved for the Saints in glory, to live in a not interrupted communion with God. To be ever with the Lord, beholding his face, to live in the sense of such a constant communion with Christ as doth afford the Soul a perfect Satisfaction. The sublunary Saint is often crying out, *Tell me, O thou whom my* Soul *loveth, where thou feedest.* This dispensation indeed will speak thee sensibly miserable, and sad, but it will not speak thee to have no relation to Christ.

Use 3. I shall shut up this discourse with a Word or two of exhortation, *Pleading with you to do what in you lies to avoid such a state, and to keep your selves within the knowledg, where Christ feedeth, where he makes his flocks to rest at noon,* 1. Consider first, *That as the Spiritual life of any Soul lyes in its union, and communion with Christ: So the comfort of his life lyeth in his sense of this communion and knowledge, how at all times, and in all conditions to Support, and to maintain it.* Our Saviour tells us that, *As the branch cannot bring forth fruit unless it abide in the Vine, so neither can we except we abide in him, John.* 15. 4. That Soul which hath no communion with Christ is as certainly dead, as the body is that hath no communion with the head, or the

the branch that hath no communion with the ſtock. Now it is true, *Senſe* is not neceſſary to *Spiritual life*. *We live* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *by faith, not by ſight*. But the comfort of the Soul doth depend upon ſenſe and knowledge, it is true as to a Chriſtians comfort, not to live, and not to know that we live, are much the ſame thing, as to its happineſs, it is not; but I ſay as to his comfort it is; What quiet can a Chriſtian have in his breaſt, what Peace in his conſcience? What joy in the Holy Ghoſt, that feeleth no intercourſes, is ſenſible of no inward communion betwixt his Soul and Chriſt?

2. Hence conſider Secondly, *That to the waky Chriſtian there is no greater miſery upon the Earth then what ariſeth from his apprehenſions of his having no communion with Chriſt*. All the enjoyments of the World will be nothing of Satisfaction to ſuch a Soul, it is an evil --- *Nullis medicabilis herbis*. I ſay with a waky ſoul it will be thus; ſome Souls are in a profound ſleep, they never think of *Eternity*, never conſider their latter end, they are ignorant, and know not the relation that Chriſt hath to a State of *Eternal happineſs*, that as Eternal life is the gift of God, ſo it is through Chriſt, for that the Father hath given into his hands the Power of Eternal life, and he giveth it to whomſoever he pleaſeth. Now theſe Souls though they have no fellowſhip, no communion at all, yet they have no miſery, no grief from it. But I ſay to the Soul that is awake, to conſider the Grave, the Eternity to which he is haſtening, 'tis the greateſt burden imaginable to lye under apprehenſions, that his *fellowſhip* is not with the Father, and with the *Son Jeſus Chriſt*.

3. Thirdly, conſider *that of all evils, thoſe lye heavieſt, and moſt ſadly upon the Soul, concerning which the man or woman is conſcious, that he himſelf hath been acceſſary to them, and a cauſe of them*. Let a good Chriſtian be at loſs for his communion with God, let the cauſe of it be what it will, he is ſad enough, but if his heart ſmites him that he himſelf hath been the cauſe of it, Oh! inſupportable burden of that reflection! he cannot bear the thoughts of his deſtroying his Soul by his own hands; of this you may make an eaſy judgment by conſidering the frame of your Spirit under ſuch accidents, though of a much lighter nature, it is ſad enough for a man to loſe his eſtate, for a Mother to loſe her Child, but for the man to think that he loſt his eſtate, through his own ſupine negligence, or for a Mother to think ſhe hath been the death of her Child: Theſe are wounds healed uſually with great difficulty. So for a

Soul to think it hath lost its communion with its dear Lord by its own supine negligence, or any voluntary act of its own which it might have avoided. This maketh a deep wound in the Soul. But will some say, what should, what can we do to uphold our communion with Christ and to maintain a sense of it? Let me here speak two words.

The first to such as have their *beloved in view*, and do yet injoy desired communion with him; 2. To such as have lost this *view*, in order to their recovery of it.

To the first I say,

1. *Be much with him whom your Soul loveth.* What the Prophet said of Gods presence of *Providence* is as true concerning the presence of God in gracious influences, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. *The Lord is with you while you are with him, if you seek him, he will be found of you.* Souls that are much with God seldom lose their sight of him, ordinarily the Souls of men, and women, first withdraw the communications of themselves unto him through levity, and wantonness, then Christ withdraweth, both in justice, to punish in them that levity, and in wisdom to make them to seek after him, *Hos.* 5. 15. *I will go, and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face, in their affliction they will seek me early.* That Soul is seldom or never at a loss to know where Christ feedeth his flocks, that keepeth a constant correspondence with him. Be much in *Prayer*, especially *secret Prayer*, much in Heavenly meditation, and contemplation; when the Spouse after her loss, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2. had found her beloved, *I held him* (saith she) *and would not let him go.* How doth the Soul hold Christ so as she will not let him go, but *by faith*, and constant, and frequent acts of fellowship and communion with him?

2. Secondly, *Take heed of grieving the holy Spirit.* It is the Apostles Counsel, *Eph.* 4. 30. *Grieve not the holy Spirit by which you are sealed to the day of Redemption.* We maintain our fellowship with Christ by the Spirit. That takes of Christs and giveth to us, and again it takes of ours and giveth to Christ, by the Spirit we Pray, by its assistance we exercise *faith*, Love, *&c.* Christ by his Spirit communicateth himself to us, and we by the Spirit do communicate our Souls to him. Take heed therefore you *grieve not this Spirit*, either by any presumptuous sinnings, or by quenching its motions, or resisting its *operations. Let every* Knock, every motion, and impulse, every impression of the holy Spirit be very valuable to, and regardable in the Eyes of your Souls.

3. Thirdly,

3. Thirdly, *Maintain in your Souls an high estimate of Jesus Christ, and the influences of his grace.* If (saith Christ) *any man loveth me, I will come to him, and make my abode with him,* John 14. 21. The Soul that truly loveth Christ shall never be ignorant where to find him.

4. Lastly, *Study holiness in all manner of conversation.* The Spouse saith that *he feedeth among the Lilies*; the *Lillies* are white, and fruitful. Let your apprehension of Christs withdrawing, the communications of himself to your Souls, be no temptation to you to withhold the communications of your selves to him, though you may find it more hard, and difficult, and that you cannot do your duty with so much ease, yet do it. If you cannot do what you would, yet do what you can, if (as you think) you do not, you cannot overtake God, yet let your Souls press hard after him.

But what shall be said to that Soul that is at loss and in such a state as that it doth not know where its Beloved feedeth, where he maketh his flocks to rest at Noon?

1. *Let such Souls look for him in the promise, where it wants the sight of him in his Providences.* There *David* found him, when he cryed out, *Remember thy Word, in which thou hast caused me to hope.* The promises are *Christs place*, when he returneth from a Soul he retreateth no further. All the punishment that our tender Lord putteth his Spouse to suffer is to *live by faith, not by sight.* Christ in his *Providences* may appear to a Soul *yea and nay*, sometimes a friend sometimes an Enemy. But in his promises he is always *yea* and *Amen* the *true and faithful one.* I have already shewed you that the *Promises* are those *green pastures* were Christ feeds his flocks in the *Noon* of trials and afflictions.

2. *Look for him in supporting influences, when you cannot see him in comforting and quickening influences.* Christ communicateth himself variously to the Souls of his People, not always in the same methods or influences, see if thou doest not feel his *strength*, when thou doest not find his *consolatory manifestations*; you have heard that the communion of the believing Soul with Christ never ceaseth, it is only our *sense* that fails, or some particular *Manifestations* or the degrees of them may abate. We ought therefore to look narrowly to see if we cannot find any influences of Christ upon our Souls, when it may be we cannot discern those which our Eye is most upon.

3. Thirdly, *Be as free as you can in your part of this communion, when you cannot discern your Lord so free in his part.* You may rest upon this; That Christ will never be in your debt, nor be long wanting in his communications of his grace to that Soul that is ready to communicate it self unto him. It may be I or another Soul may not see, and discern it, but Christ is never behind hand with the Soul as to acts of love. Nay we could not be free in communication of our Souls to him, without his first influencing our Souls with strength to such a liberty.

4. Lastly take the advice of your beloved in the text. *Go your way by the footsteps of the flock*: And feed your kids by the Shepherds tents. But that leadeth me to the last part of the Text, which I called the *Direction* in answer to the petition. Of that (if God please) in my next exercise.

Sermon XLVI.

Cant. 1. 8.

If thou knowest not (O thou fairest amongst Women) Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock, and feed thy Kids by the Shepherds Tents.

I am now come to the last part of the Text; The Beloved's *Direction*, What to do, that she might find where her beloved *fed* his flocks, *where he made them to rest at Noon.* It is expressed in these words, *Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock*, and *feed thy kids by the Shepherds tents.* By the *flocks* when I opened the words more largely, I told you was meant, the *Church*, the People of God, often in Scripture compared to a flock, *I will gather the remnant of the flock*, Jer. 23. 2. *The Lord hath visited his flock*, Zech. 10. 3. *Fear not little flock, it is your Fathers will to give you a Kingdom*, Luke. 12. 32. *Feed the flock of God*, 1 Pet. 5. 2. So in many other Texts. The word in the *Hebrew* [NST], indifferently signifieth any company of lesser Cattel,

tel, whether *Sheep*, or *Goats*, though it be most ordinarily applied to sheep, as in 1 *Sam.* 15. 2. *Jer.* 50. 6. *Jer.* 31. 19, &c. The People of God are ordinarily the lesser sort of men, and women in the world. *Not many noble, not many wise*, but the *poor of the World hath the Lord Chosen*. The great ones of the World for the most part are of the *Herd*, not of the flock.

1 *A flock is a term of multitude.* Gods People are not the greatest number of the World, but yet they are a great number, God in the worst times (which were those of *Ahab* had 7000 in *Israel* who had not bowed the knee to *Baal*, nor *kissed him, with their lips*. St. *John* saw 144000 sealed, *Rev.* 7. 4. There were two great breeders of Gods antient Flock. *Leah*, and *Rachel*, these two did *build up the house of God*, from these came threescore and ten Souls whom God sent to pasture in *Egypt*, there they were killed up apace, yet they multiplyed to an exceeding great number, from thence they were led like a Flock through the Wilderness by the conduct of *Moses*, and *Aaron*, in *Canaan* they also increased, till for their sins God let in Wolves upon them to destroy them. It is true all were not *Israel*, that were of *Israel*, but yet they *all constituted* the *visible Church of the Jews*, and doubtless there were a great number of them who were of the *invisible Church*, of that *little Flock* to whom it was *the Fathers will to give the Kingdom*. In Christs time, the flock of God began to be gathered together in one, and soon after his ascension into Heaven, those *other sheep*, mentioned, *John* 10. who were not of the Jewish fold began to be added, by vertue of his commission granted to 12 *principal Shepherds*, under the *great Shepherd*, and multitudes were added to this flock; since that time the wild beasts of the field, and forrest, have broken in upon it, feeding in several Countries and places; But yet they are many.

2. A flock is a *term of unity*. The Church of Christ is many, yet but *one body*, united by one *common faith*, and under on head, All the true Members of it, have *one Shepherd*, *one law*, and *rule*. The true Church therefore is doubtless the flock which is here mentioned.

By the footsteps of the flock.] The footsteps you all know is the Print of the feet. The course of *holiness* is in Scripture called, *The way of the Righteous*. The foorsteps of the flock, can signify nothing but the Examples of the holy Servants

of

of God which have gone before us, in the way of holiness.

And feed thy Kids by the Shepherds tents.] Kids as you know are *young Goats*. Once in Scripture *Goats* are put in opposition to *Sheep*, *Matth.* 25. to signify the wicked of the Earth, which hath given Interpreters occasion to interpret this phrase [*thy filthy and unclean thoughts.*] But it is observable that though *Goats* be a term once used in Scripture in that sense, yet Goats are not always mentioned in holy writ in an *ill sense*. In this very Song the *Spouses hair* is compared to a flock of *Goats*, Ch. 4. *v.* 1. The *Goat* to the Jews was not an *unclean beast*, the *hair* of it was much used about the *Tabernacle*, and the *body of it* was often used in *Sacrifice*. Their interpretation therefore is doubtless to be preferred, who interpret it, 1. *Broken of the weak Members of Christ*, or 2. *of the inferior faculties of the Soul.*

By the Shepherds tents.] It is all along a Metaphor. The flock is the *Church*. The true Sheep of this Flock are those who hear the voice of Christ, and follow him, as himself tells us, *My Sheep hear my voice, and follow me.* The *Principal Shepherd* is *Christ*, Joh. 10. 11. *I am the true Shepherd.* He administreth this great charge committed to him by his Father by inferiour Shepherds. He led his ancient People the Jews *like a Flock* by the hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*, and afterwards made use of several Shepherds to feed them. Christ committed his Flock to the 12 Apostles, with power to ordain *Pastors* and *Teachers*. The *Shepherds tents* signify the places, where they feed the *Flock of Christ*. Shepherds in those countries had no fixed houses, but moveable tents which they carried about with them, and pitched now here, now there, as was most convenient for the *feeding of their Flocks*. If any ask me, where we shall find these *footsteps of the Flock?* I answer in the Word of God, we have no other infallible record of them that I know, so that by the *footsteps of the Flock*, and the *Shepherds tents*, two things are clearly to be understood. 1. *The Examples of Gods Saints recorded in Scripture.* 2. *The Ordinances of God dispensed by his faithful Ministers.*

Hither doth Christ send his Spouse, inquiring where he feeds, where he made his Flocks to rest at Noon. Vnto which they Text would lead me, *viz.* 1. *To a discourse concerning the Word of God as the Rule of Christians*, the certain *footsteps of the Flock are to be found there.* 2. *To a discourse concerning our duty to imitate the Saints of God.*

Some-

Something I must touch upon as to both these, but I shall discourse neither of them in their latitude, having fully done it lately in set Discourses upon those Arguments; I shall now speak to neither of them further than they relate to the direction of the Text: Being both the surest compass for a Christian when he is at loss, to direct his course by, when he is in distress, and knows not what to do.

Hence the Doctrine is;

Prop. *The surest way for Christians to support and maintain their communion with Christ, under any doubts or dark dispensations of God to them, is for them to keep to the examples of the Saints of God under such dispensations, and to keep themselves close to Divine Institutions.*

The Proposition you see is concerning Christians *injoying* and *upholding* their *communion* with Christ in a day of darkest dispensations, in the *Noon of Trials* and *Afflictions*. 2. It directeth a double means in order to this end. 1. *A keeping to the footsteps of the Flock.* 2. *Feeding by the Shepherds Tents.* I shall speak to this by way of *Explication*, *Confirmation*, and *Application*. By way of Explication; the only Question is, What *Flock*, what *Shepherds* are here spoken of?

1. It must be *Christ's Flock*; that is plain. There are other Flocks in the World, but the Text is doubtless to be understood of the Flock of Christ, which I before shewed you was the *Church of Christ*.

2. I think it reasonable also to determine, *That that Flock is here meant, for whose feet we have the best assurance that they were guided and upheld by the unerring Spirit of God.* The *Papists* call to us for this, to *keep to the footsteps of the Flock*: But when we come to ask them where that Flock is, they will tell us, it is at *Rome*, where it hath been *kept* and *fed* by a lineal Succession of *Bishops* from the *Apostles times*. The name of the *Church of Christ* is an honourable name; this maketh every Party cry out (as the *Jews of old*) *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord are we*. There is scarce any company of Hereticks and Sectaries, but lays claim to this name. Neither can this Text be understood of all those that are within the Pale of the Visible Church, which hath in it bad as well as good, but of that *little Flock* only, who *hear Christ*, and *follow him*, and those to whom it is *our heavenly Father's will to give a Kingdom*, the footsteps of those who have made the Word a light to their feet, and a lamp to their paths; for none can be so absurd as to

think, that Christ here directeth his Spouse to go her way by the footsteps of those who walk contrary to the will of his Father. Now, where shall we find, where can we find those of whom we are sure they were of this *little Flock*? or, where shall we find the certain practice of such, but in the Records of holy Writ? For the *present Church of Rome*, those that know the second Commandment, or any of the Revelations of the Divine Will against *Idolatry*, must know this *Flock* is not to be found there. For the Primitive Church, if they mean the Apostolick Church, the Church in their Age, whose Story we have Recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, we agree with them, that this is the *Flock* whose *footsteps we are to follow*, yet no further than they followed Christ. *Be you followers of me* (saith the Apostle) *as I am of Christ*; but for the *following Church* after their Age, we are so much at loss to know what they did, Antichrist hath so trodden out their footsteps, so purged and corrupted all Writings that should give us any true account of what the Church did, that we can by no means allow the Record of their practice to be a sufficient Guide to us. We have no sufficient Evidence of the prints of their feet, in matters wherein the Eternal Salvation of our Souls are concerned. We have a more sure word of Prophecy, and we are sure we are not to follow them in any thing wherein they did not follow Christ. We conclude then as to this matter, that Christ in these words intended to give his Spouse a certain Rule, to follow the steps of those whom they might be sure it was *Christ's Flock*, and whose footsteps might be seen. This *Flock* can be only that, the print of whose feet we have in the unerring Word of God. We believe that in all Ages of the World Christ hath had a Flock, a number that have heard his voice, and followed him, to whom he hath given, and will give Eternal Life, but they have been under various dispensations, sometimes more, and sometimes less perspicuous to the World. We believe that it hath been the design of *Rome* ever since the Mystery of Iniquity began to work in it, to blot out the prints of the feet of the Flock of Christ in former times; we therefore reasonably in pursuit of this Direction of Christ's, overlook the Churches of this, and former Ages. The practice of those of *Rome* in this and late ages we know to be directly contrary to the Word of God. The practice of the *Primitive Church in former ages* we are incertain of, further then what is contained in holy writ, we know that it hath been the policy of the *Papists*, to blot out all the records of those times which might make

against

against them, any thing that might shew us that the *Doctrine, Worship & Discipline* of the Church in those ages was different from their present practices, we know that the records of the Primitive Churches practice (excepting that in the Apostles time recorded in Scripture) have been mostly in their hands and they have blotted out, and put in what they pleased, to justify their *Idolatry and Superstitions*, we therefore call *to the Law* and *to the Testimony*, to the holy Scriptures; we are sure they have not been kept in their hands onely, we believe them the pure Word of God. We say there is no other certain rule, no other unquestionable record of the footsteps of the flock: We know they are able to make the man of God wise to salvation. thoroughly furnished to every good work. All Protestants acknowledg them a perfect rule as to matter of *Doctrine*, we say they also are so as to *Worship* and *Discipline*, and as to all our conversation. We know the practice of the Saints, and Servants of God in holy Writ (not reproved by it) are the *footsteps* of *Christs flock*, for others we know not, we are sure if they were contrary to the *footsteps* of the Servants of God in holy Writ, they are no footsteps of the flock of Christ, which *hears his voice*, and owneth that only, and will not follow strangers.

2. As to the *Shepherds* mentioned in the Text, We know Christ is the *true Shepherd*, the *chief Shepherd*. He *feedeth his Flock like a Shepherd*. He ascending up into Heaven, hath betrusted his Flock to *Pastors* and *Teachers*, to Under-Shepherds, we know that if these be *Christs Shepherds*, they must take, and follow Christ's directions, and they are no further *Shepherds* then they do so. He hath indeed betrusted to some his Gospel, the Ministration both of the *Doctrine*, and the *Ordinances of the Gospel*: As they are to publish no other Doctrine, so they are to prescribe no other Rules of life, either for the *Worship of God*, or *government of the Church*, they have no *legislative power in the Church* committed to them; only an *executive power*, to execute those Laws, those Ordinances, which Christ the Supreme *Shepherd*, and his *Apostles*, which were his first Commissioners have left. This is the trust which Christ hath committed to them, in the discharge of which alone, they can be faithful, they are not the *Ministers of men*, but the *Ministers of Christ*. By the *Tents of those Shepherds* who do this all Christians are bound to abide, and to feed themselves, neither casting off *Divine institutions*, nor *submitting* to *humane institutions* contrary to the Divine rule;

and if the Divine rule be a perfect rule, whatsoever is besides it is contrary to it, for it reproacheth it with imperfection, or else is meerly, idle, and Superfluous.

That this is the duty of Christians, will appear both from the the consideration of the end for which God hath left us the footsteps of the flock in holy Writ, and also from comparing this with other courses.

1. Let us first consider the *end for which God hath left us the footsteps of his flock in holy Writ, and when he ascended up on high, gave gifts unto men, and amongst others Pastors and Teachers.* The footsteps of the flock of Christ are to be found in the Word of God, you have in Scripture not onely the instructions of *David*, the words of the man according to Gods own heart, but the *practice of* David *recorded* under several circumstances: Not onely the Doctrine, and instructions of the Apostles in their *Sermons*, and *Epistles*, but the *Acts of the Apostles* teaching us their practice. Now though it be true, that their *examples* oblige us in nothing wherein they did not follow the Lord Jesus Christ, nor in any thing which they did in conformity to the *Ceremonial law*, wherein they used a liberty (that law being dead with Christ, but through a gracious indulgence, allowed, for a time, till the believing Jews could be Satisfied concerning the *abolition* of it, in order to the gaining the Jews, and walking towards them without offence, upon which account *Paul* both circumcised *Timothy* and purified himself. Nor are their examples our rules, in what they did as *Apostles* or as men indued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, *working miracles* or *speaking with tongues*; for as we cannot do the latter, so we want their *mission* and more extraordinary commission to do the former. Hence Ministers are under no obligation to do as they did, fixing no where, but going up and down preaching the Gospel, and settling Churches: yet in other things, wherein they acted as Ministers of the Gospel, or private Christians, we are bound to the imitation of them, and God hath left us their actions upon sacred record for our instruction. *For whatsoever is written aforetime is written for our learning, Rom.* 15. 4. The *Apostle* telleth us, *That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* This is the end for which God hath given us the Scripture, and all the Scripture, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16.

2. It

2. It is the most *safe* and *certain* rule. The two great things that commend a *rule* given with reference to any end is the *security of it*, and the *certainty* of it. To walk by the *footsteps* of Christs *flock* recorded in Scripture must be a *safe rule*, no man needeth fear sinning against God, by *obeying his Word*, and living up to the rule, *direction*, and prescription of it, sin must be something contrary to the *Divine Rule*. In following other *rules* men *may err*, in following of this rule they cannot err. The *certainty*, of a rule much commends it. If the Trumpet give an incertain sound who shall prepare himself for the battel? If there be no certainty in a rule who can follow the direction of it? Let us now compare this *rule* as to this case what a *Christian is to do*, especially in a time of *affliction and distress*, to maintain and uphold his *communion with Christ*.

1. *Some will pretend to the Spirit as their rule. They have an anointing* (they tell us) *which teacheth them all things*, and so pretend to follow the *motions, and impressions of the holy Spirit. But* there is no *certainty in* this pretended Rule for all Spirits are not of God. The Spirit hath given us the Rule of the word, for you heard before, *That all Scripture is given us by divine inspiration*, and that it is able to *make the man of God wise to Salvation*. The Spirit teacheth nothing contrary to the Word. The Word directs us to follow the *footsteps of the Flock*. There can be no certainty in pretended impressions from the Spirit which are contrary to the Word of God, no nor any *security*. For all such pretences must issue in the deceit of our own hearts, we following our own lusts, and imaginations in stead of the holy Spirit, or (which is worse) the impressions of the *evil Spirit*. Yet this is the rule of all Enthusiasts.

2. Others call out to us to follow the *Church*, the *practice of the Church in all ages*. And indeed if they could make appear to us what that was, they would say something, but what certainty can there be in this rule while they that talk of it, can neither make that Church appear to us, nor yet what their practice was; we know who were the Church, in the Apostles age, and we know what their practice was, by the records of holy Writ, but who the Church were, and what their practice was in latter ages we cannot tell, and by consequence there is no certainty in this rule, we may follow the *steps* of the *Synagogue of Satan* instead of the steps of the flock of Christ.

3. The *Papists* call to us to follow *Traditions*, and indeed for the Traditions delivered us by the Apostles we see reason to follow them, and if they could by an unquestionable record make out any thing to us, which had been received as an *Universal Tradition* of the *Universal Church*, we should have a great respect and reverence for it, but for *unwritten Traditions*, which the *Papists* put into an equal ballance with the Word of God for Christians rule, being (as they pretend) delivered as rules by the Apostles to the Church of God, as we know no need we have of such, so we have no *certainty* that any such things were ever so delivered and therefore can see no security in receiving them, or giving any ear unto them.

4. There is a 4th sort, that in distresses are much *for seeking God, and walking according to the impressions we have upon such seeking*, this practice is founded upon an excellent bottom: 1. A *Precept* for the owning, and acknowledging of God in all our ways. 2. A *Promise that he will direct our steps, Prov.* 3. *v.* 6. Seeking of God at all times, (at such times especially) is the great duty of Christians, and if rightly done, cannot be in vain, but for the right performance of it, a Christian must have respect both to the *matter of his Prayer*, and also to the *manner of it*. It is to the *matter of our Prayers* onely that I am here concerned to speak. As to this our rule is, that *it must be something consonant to the will of God*. I mean his will revealed in his Word. Hence it followeth,

1. *That when God hath revealed his will in his Word for, or against a thing which we are about to do, for us to seek God, whether we should do it or no, forbear it or no, is to tempt and provoke God.* This is like *Balaams* going to inquire of God whether he should go with the Messengers of *Balak*, after that God had plainly told him he should not go. We ought to acquiesce in the determination of Gods will in his Word, whether in the Precepts or the examples of the Servants of God recorded there, and for things forbidden to avoid them, for things commanded to do them; here's no place for seeking God as to the doing or forbearing; so that although for things of this nature, as to what God hath commanded us to do, we may, and ought to seek God for direction, help, and assistance in the doing of them: And as to things forbidden we may *seek God* for strength to avoid them, and all temptations to them, yet we may not seek God whether we

we should do the things so commanded, and forbear the things so forbidden yea or no. Such seeking of God is but asking leave to sin against him.

2. In *particular actions* as to which Gods *Word* hath not particularly directed us, it is our duty to *seek God* for *direction, and having first well considered the general rules of the Word of God, if we find the action neither commanded nor forbidden, according to them we may, for ought I know, attend the impressions we find upon our Spirits, after such sincere and serious seeking of God. And take them to be the will of God concerning us as to such actions.* But this is but a digression from my subject. This is enough to shew you, there is no such *security*, or certainty in any direction we can have, as in following the *footsteps of the flock* of Christ, the prints of whose feet we find in the Word of God.

2. It is as reasonable that we should feed by the *Shepherds Tents*, that is, attend upon *Divine institutions*, if we would enjoy any *fellowship, and communion with God*; for it is unreasonable to expect the influences of Divine Grace in any way, but such only as God hath promised he will give them in, much less in the neglect, or contempt of any such means as he hath appointed. The promise is, *Exod.* 20. 24. *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee.* Our communion with God depends upon his *coming to us, and blessing us.* Where God will come unto us, and bless us, there we may, there we shall have communion with him. Now where will *God come unto us, and bless us? In all places where he recordeth his Name to dwell*; what doth that signify but in all his sacred ordinances, and institutions? Conformable to this is his promise in the New Testament, *Mat.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name* (that is, at my command, or by my order) *there am I in the midst amongst them*, and to his Ministers his promise is made, *Mat.* 28. 19. *Go you therefore, and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you alway, to the end of the world.* Where can we expect communion with God, but where he hath promised to be with his People, to meet them, and to bless them?

Observe from hence how unreasonable they are that *talk of a communion with God, or expect any such thing, who make not the* Use 1.

Word

Word of God a light to their Feet, who go not forth by the footsteps of the flock, who feed not their Souls by the Shepherds Tents: under this condemnation fall,

1. *All such who having no regard to the Word as their rule, walk according to the imaginations of their own hearts*, which you shall find to be the constant Character of wicked Men in Scripture.

2. *Such as follow the incertain examples, and traditions of men.*

3. Lastly, *Such as cast off ordinances under a pretence of a more immediate fellowship, and communion with God.* There is a middle way betwixt resting in, and taking up with mere external performances, and *casting them off*. It is true, a Soul may wait upon God in ordinances, and have no communion with God in them. Communion with God lies in more then meer lending an Ear to God, and allowing him our bodily presence, in more then a communication of the will of God to our external senses: but this is to be had by the *Shepherds Tents*, in places where *God hath recorded his Name to dwell*, and the performance of such external acts, as God hath required, and made his promises of that nature unto. To look for a presence of God with us in a neglect, or contempt of these institutions, is to look for what we have no reason to expect to find.

Use 2. Let me only further perswade you that bear me this day, *to follow the counsel given you in the Text. To go your ways by the footsteps of Christs flock; to feed your Souls by his Shepherds Tents.*

1. *In all your actions go forth by the footsteps of the flock.* Do what you have found the Servants of God have done, whose names and practices you have upon a sure record in Holy Writ. As it was prophecied of old, that there should come times when many should say, *Lo here is Christ*, or *lo there is Christ*, to amuse Souls, and make their way incertain to them. So the times are come, when many say, *Lo here is the Church*, others say, *lo it is there*, the *Papists* say it is with them, and other parties say it is with them, in this incertain cry we have a certain rule. In the Holy Scripture we have a certain record of the *flock of Christ*, we have certain prints of their feet, *peace shall be upon those who walk according to that rule*, you may be deceived as to *other flocks*, as to that you cannot be deceived. The practice of the Primitive Church not recorded in Holy Writ, the pretended *Traditions of the Primitive Church*, of which the Scripture maketh no mention, are very incertain things, the Word of God that is a

sure

sure rule, let none leave that which is certain, for those things that are incertain, if you cannot find in the Holy Scriptures a sufficiency to make you wise to Salvation, both as to what you are to do in the Worship of God, and in the whole of your conversation, then there may be some reason for you to hear what others say, and to listen to your own reason, but there is a sufficiency there.

Obj. Some will tell us, *That Scripture is obscure, and who shall interpret it to us but the Church.*

Sol. If there be any thing in Scripture necessary for us to know, that is obscure, I am sure the *practice of the Church* after the Apostles times, is much *more obscure*; who shall vouch the Authority of any one Book that pretendeth to give us any such account? There is a great deal of fault found with that principle, that we ought to do nothing but what we have a Warrant for from the Word of God. If it be rightly understood, I know no fault that is to be found with it, not that we must have a particular Warrant from the Word of God, for every action that we do, none ever asserted any such thing. But we ought to do nothing for which we have *not a particular, or general Warrant from the Word of God.* In some actions (those especially which relate to the Worship of God) the Word of God is a *particular rule in all things.* No act of Worship, no mean of Worship is to be used, but what we have a particular Warrant in Gods Word; the reason is, because there is all the reason in the World God should prescribe his own Homage, and because it is a *sufficient rule,* he that worshippeth God according to the rules of the Word, neither adding thereto, nor diminishing therefrom, shall worship God *acceptably.* As to particular, *natural,* and *civil actions,* the word is not a *particular sufficient rule,* but it is *a general rule*; it is impossible that the Word of God should particularly direct all the *civil* actions of a mans life, it hath left a thousand things of that nature to our own *liberty and wisdom,* only hath given us some *general rules,* which we are to observe in them; in these things a Christian hath not such a liberty, but that he ought to obey the Ordinances, and laws of men, so far as they respect the order and government of Nations and Kingdoms, and that out of conscience to the *Commandment of God,* requiring such obedience to men in their Spheres, and the capacities which God hath set them in.

Secondly,

Secondly, *Feed your Kids by the Shepherds Tents.* Keep to the *Ordinances, and Institutions of Christ,* administred by those whom he hath set over his flock as *Shepherds.* That is the sense of that part of the direction, and by the way this sheweth us a necessity, and usefulness of a *Gospel Ministry.* It is the design of *Jesuites,* and *Romish Priests* to take you off from your Ministers. The *Sociman* complaineth, that the world hath been a long time troubled with an idle sort of Persons called *Ministers,* *Quakers,* and other *Enthusiasts,* all sing the same Song, yet there is none of these but have their Heads, their Guides, and Teachers, only possibly some of them would have none who should wholly set themselves apart, and give up themselves to this work, others would only bring you off the true Ministers of the Gospel, to put you under *Idol Shepherds.* Certain it is that the Shepherds mentioned in the Text are such as are sent by the great Shepherd, and can truly derive from the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the question *how shall we know which be the Shepherds tents,* our reason will direct us not to give credit to those who only bear witness of themselves, Christ saith, *John.* 5. 31. *If I bear witness of my self my witness is not true*: That is, if I alone bear witness of my self. Such a Testimony is also more to be suspected when it is arrogant, when men challenge to themselves to be alone the *true Shepherds.* But for your direction I shall lay down a few conclusions.

1. *It is both impossible for any to know them by their lineal succession from the Apostles, who were the first deputed by Christ to feed his flock, and needless to make such an inquiry for them.* The former assertion proveth the latter, for it is doubtless needless to look for what is impossible to be found. This is the great thing which the *Papists* boast of, the great thing which they contend for, That those can be no true Ministers who are not ordained by *Bishops* in a *lineal succession* or a *personal succession from the Apostles,* & *Rome* hath only had such a succession, therefore the *Shepherds* Tents, are only to be found amongst them. I am sorry to find any *Protestants* lisping this language of *Ashdod*; *Protestant Divines* in former ages have thought it enough to prove *succession in Doctrine.* The truth is a succession of Persons is a thing impossible to be proved, if we must own no Ministers, but such as can prove they are made so by *Bishops, in a true succession from the Apostles,* I am sure they must own none at all, for

how

how is it possible think you that after near 1700 years, any Ministers should be able to prove such a succession. All the Issue of this contest must be either to bring us all again to *Rome*, which indeed vainly boasteth of such a succession, or else to *Atheism*, to the owning of no true Ministry at all, and consequently to no *Ordinances*. Nor is any such inquiry necessary, for certainly Christ hath clothed his Church with a power to restore his institutions if they were lost, or the exercise of them for any space of time were interrupted.

2. Secondly, The *true Shepherds are to be known by their mission.* Christ is agreed to be the *true Shepherd*, the principal *Shepherd*. All true Under-Shepherds must have their mission from him. He certainly sendeth none but, 1. *Such as are by him fitted and qualified for all parts of their work.* 2. Such as are *disposed, & inclined to their work.* Consider but what the work of the *Shepherd* is, *viz.* to *feed the flock* of Christ, to *watch over them*, &c. And this is one way for you to know Christs *Shepherds*, they are by him qualified for their work with gifts and abilities to pray, and Preach, to open, and to apply the Scriptures, they are also by him *inclined* and *disposed to it*, desiring the Office of a *Bishop*, and to give up themselves to it. Where this is found, there's *Christs Mission.* They are also *called by the Church*, proved, set apart to the work by *fasting and Prayer*, but this is onely their exrernal mission. A Church may be so corrupted as to send out men who were never sent of Christ, neither having any *internal qualifications to fit them for it*, nor *any inclinations, and heart unto* it, only desiring to be put into the Priests Office for a *morsel of bread.* No good Christian can judg these *Christs Shepherds*, for though he hath given a power to his Church to send out Ministers, yet they are limited to such as are *able and faithful*, nor ought any to be look'd upon as a true Shepherd or Minister of Christ, who apparently hath no inward qualifications for the work of the Ministry nor any heart faithfully to discharge it.

3. Thirdly, You shall know them *by their Doctrine*, Gal. 1. 8. *Though we or an Angel from Heaven Preach any other Gospel unto you, then that which we have Preached unto you, let him be accursed, v.* 9. *As we said before so now I say again, If any man Preach any other Gospel unto you, then that you have received, let him be accursed.* He that is *accursed*, or to be accursed, is none

of those *Shepherds*, by whose Tents Christians are to feed their Souls, but those who bring any Doctrine to Peoples Ears, that is contrary to the Doctrine delivered by Christ and his Apostles, or other then that, is accursed, and by the Judgment of the *Apostles* to be accounted *accursed*; such a one therefore, can be no such Person as Christians are bound to hear, or to feed their Souls by their Tents. But you will say, *what if they be not declared so or adjudged so, by the Church.* This is the Churches sin and neglect of their duty. The Church by its judgments cannot make one hair of truth *white* or *black*, she is only to declare and adjudg that to be the Doctrine of Christ which is so: And to declare and adjudg that which is not so to be what it is. If the Church will neglect her duty I am not to neglect mine. If the Major part of the Church be so corrupted, that they will call evil good, and good evil, determine Error to be truth, and truth to be Error, their Error cannot conclude me. If it could, we had long since been *Arrians*, and in later times been *Papists*. *Protestants* have therefore rightly determined that every true *Christian* hath a *judgment* of *discretion* in this case. The sole judgment of truth & Error is in Christ and his Word. A declarative judgment is in the Church, but a *judgment of discretion*, so far as to guide a Christians particular practice, is in every Christian, who is to *prove all things*, and *to hold fast that only* which is good. I cannot, I ought not to feed my Soul by the Tents of those Shepherds, who bring me other *Doctrine* then what they can prove from the Word of God. If the Church will suffer such, I am not bound by their sins. Gods Pastors *feed his People with wisdom and understanding*, *Jer.* 3. 15. Not with meer high-swelling Words of vanity, much less with lies and Erronious Doctrine contrary to Christs and the Apostles Doctrine.

4. *Fourthly*, Christ tells us that to the true Shepherd, *the Porter openeth*, *John* 10. *v.* 3. And the *Sheep hear his voice.* God opens the hearts of his People to such as are his *Shepherds.* The Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, they were the *seal of his Apostleship*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 2. And again, 2 *Cor.* 3. 2, 3. *Ye are our Epistle, Written in our hearts, and known, and read of all men, for as much as you are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ Ministered by us, Written, not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart.* God hath

hath sealed the ministry of those Ministers to be from him, whose ministry he hath blessed, by opening the hearts of People to it, and by it; there needs no further evidence, this is a sufficient letter of recommendation of them to all that own the name of Christ. I speak not here for that insignificant conversion of men to an *opinion*, without a turning of their heart from sin unto God, but of the *real conversion* or *change* of mens hearts. This is a proof Sirs, of true *Shepherds* a proof of a true ministry, 2 *Cor.* 13. 3. I will never question the truth of that mans ministry, with whose ministry I see God going along. So that their ministry *opens the Eyes of the blind*, and *turns men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance amongst them that are Sanctified. Which were the ends for which God sent out Paul*, *Act.* 26. 18. Let such men as these be ordained by whom they will, *Bishops* or *Presbyters*, or *only sent out by the Church*, let them be ordained by what Rites and in what manner they will, it is plain they are Christs Shepherds. Let there have been defects in their entrance, and admission by the Church into the ministry. God hath now sealed their ministry, all defects are taken away.

5. Our Saviour hath given us another note of a true Shepherd, *John* 10. 4. *When he putteth forth his Sheep he goeth before them*, he *doth not* only lead them by his voice but by his feet. I shall never believe that Christ sent an *open Drunkard* to persuade men not to *be drunk with wine wherein is excess*, nor a *Scandalous* and *unclean Person* to tell men *that Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*. Nor a *profane Swearer* to Preach to men, *Swear not at all*. Christ indeed did send out *Judas*, but he was under no *Scandalous Character* till he betrayed his Master. A *secret Hypocrite*, whom we do not discern may be judged by *us sent of Christ*. But a Scandalous profane Person cannot. The Church ought to cast out such unsavoury salt; if she neglects her duty, I ought not to neglect mine: I am bound to feed by no such Shepherds Tents.

6. The *true Shepherds of Christ will not traduce, and revile one another*, the false Apostles traduced *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, as an hireling, and a weak man, *&c.* you read not that *Paul* and *Peter*, &c. ever did so, there was some hot Contests betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and *Paul* and *Peter*, but

they never ended in revilings, and seeking of a proof of Christ one in another. In short, if you see any Ministers who are able to *Pray* and *Preach*, and *faithful in doing it*, and who in Preaching mind the Souls of the People, and feed them not with the air of a few fine Words: Nor with rotten, and corrupt Doctrines. Any whom the Lord owneth, making them blessed instruments to turn Souls to God, any who walk before their flock, who live up to what they Preach in all holiness of life, conclude these are the Shepherds Tents by which Christ hath commanded you to feed, if you would have any communion with him. Regard not what *Romish Priests say*, that they have no *Apostolical Succession*; no what *Enthusiasts* say, that they are *hirelings*, therefore none of *Christs Shepherds*. He is no hireling that receiveth wages, for *the labourer* is by God determined *worthy of his hire*. He is an *hireling* in the sense of Christ, *John* 10. that regards not the Souls of People, and *looks at nothing but his hire*. I shall only press your feeding by the Shepherds Tents,

1. *From the former advantages you have had from your Souls feeding there.* I shall allude to that of the Apostle, *Galat.* 3. 2, 3. This only would I know of you, were not you converted from sin unto God by the Ministers of Christ, by such Shepherds, as I have been describing to you? Were your hearts first changed, by those that declaim against Ministers and Ordinances, &c.

2. Consider *the woful Examples of those who have cast off the Ministry and Ordinances of God.* What horrors have filled the Souls of some? What *stupid blindness have others fallen into?* How many of them are delivered up by God to strong delusions to believe lies, or to a looseness of life and conversation, to commit iniquity with greediness, and that without any apparent sense or feeling. I could give you several, strange instances, but I shall rather chuse to leave you to be informed by your own Observation.

Sev-

Sermon XLVII.

Canticles 1. 9.

I have compared thee (O my Love!) to a company of Horses in Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

I Have done with the Answer of the blessed *Lover* to his *Spouse's Petition*; she prayed him to let her *know where he fed, where he made his Flock to rest at Noon.* How in her state and circumstances of *Affliction* she might enjoy the fullest and sweetest communion with him. He hath directed her to *go her way by the foot-steps of the Flock,* to *feed her Kids by the Shepherds Tents.* But he hath not finished his Discourse. *'Tis seldom that Christ in his Answers to his Peoples Prayers, giveth them strict and bare measure*; it is ordinarily *pressed down, and running over.* He goes on,

I have compared thee (O my Love!) to a company of Horses in Pharaoh's *Chariots.* Upon a view of other Translations, I find little or no difference; what it, is mostly about *terms.* The word which we translate *Love,* the LXX translate πλησίον μου, *My Neighbour*; others, *My Kinswoman.* The word which we translate a company of Horses, the LXX, and those who follow them (the *Syriack* and *Arabick*) translate *my Mare. Pagnine, Montanus,* the *Vulgar Latine,* and our *Translation readit, a company,* or *my company of Horses.* We will shortly inquire the sense of those two terms. The first word which we translate *My Love,* cometh from the Hebrew root רעה which in its primary signification, signifieth *to feed as a Shepherd feedeth his Flock.* In a secondary sense it signifieth, *To associate, to shew ones self a companion to another,* or *a friend,* because Shepherds use to associate together; thence רעיתי which is a Substantive in the Feminine Form, used both in this verse, and again, *c.* 2. 2. *chap.* 4. 1, 7. *ch.* 2, 2. 10. 13. *ch.* 5. 2. signifieth one who doth intimately associate him or her self with another, so may be translated by, *My Friends, my Love,* or *My Companions* or any other

other term of like signification. It is not material which.

For the other term לסכתי, the question is, Whether it should be translated *My Mare*, or *my company of Horses*, the Original word סוס, signifieth an Horse; thence cometh סוסה, in the Feminine Form, which is the word used here. I think that in the *Feminine Form*, it is only used in this Text, so that it is difficult to determine which is the truest Translation, *My Mare*, or *My Horse*, or *My company of Horses*, or a Mare, an Horse, a company of Horses, סוס, is often used, to signifie a single Horse, *Psal.* 32. 9. A *company of Horses*, *Exod.* 14. 9. It is also as hard to determine whether it should be read, *My company of Horses*, or a company; for though the *Affix* often hath the force of the Pronoun of the first Person, yet it is sometimes added Paragogically; so *Pagnine* and *Mercer* determine it here, and justifie it from the like usage of it, *Lam.* 1. 1. *Isa.* 1. 21. Besides that, the following words, *in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*, would make one think it should not be translated *My Company*, but *A Company*. In the words is, 1. *A very amicable Compellation*; My Friend, My Love, My Associate. 2. *A Comparison*; where is, 1. *The Person comparing*, I have likened. 2. *The Person compared*, thee. 3. The *Thing* to which she is compared, *Horses, A company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*. The Text affords us two Propositions.

1 Prop. *The Believing Soul is Christ's Associate, or Companion, his intimate Friend.*

2 Prop. *That Christ hath likened such a Soul to a company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

I shall begin with the first of these; *The Believing Soul is Christ's Love, his Friend, his Fellow, or intimate Associate.* The word signifieth all these. There is a great dearinesi, and friendly fellowship betwixt the Lord Jesus Christ and the Spouse; whether by the Spouse, we understand the *Believing Soul*, or *the Church*, which is made up of such Souls. The word almost in this Form, from the same root, is translated *fellow*, *Judg.* 11. 37. *I and my fellows*, Psal. 45. 14. The *Virgins her Companions.* He had before called her the *fairest amongst Women*, *v.* 8. to shew his *value* and *estimate* of her; he here calls her his *Love*, his *Friend*, his *Fellow*, or *Companion.* It is a very sweet meditation, a *pleasant voice* surely, to hear him whom God calleth *his fellow*, and *who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father*, stooping to Dust and Ashes, and to the Worms of the Earth, and calling them his *Love*, his *Friends*, his *Fellows.*

Fellows. Surely it is good for us to ſtand here a little, and underſtand the *ſignificancy* and meaning of this expreſſion, inquiring,

1. *How Chriſt approveth himſelf his Spouſes Companion and Fellow.*

2. *How he* (who knoweth not how to complement like vain man) *by his influence upon, and by his Communion with his Church, and with the Believer, declares her to be indeed his Love, and himſelf to be her near and moſt intimate friend.*

1. *Chriſt hath made himſelf our Fellow, by his taking of our Nature upon him.* He was from all Eternity God the Father's *Fellow*; God himſelf calleth him ſo, *Zech.* 13. 7. *Awake O Shepherd! Awake O Sword againſt the Shepherd, and againſt the man that is my Fellow!* Chriſt applieth that Text to himſelf, *Mat.* 26. 31. The wiſe man telleth us, *Prov.* 8. 30. that from Eternity, *He was by him, as one brought up with him, and was daily his delight.* And the Apoſtle tells us, he *thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father.* By his *Incarnation* he made himſelf our *Fellow*, *Heb.* 2. 14. *Foraſmuch as the Children were partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo took part with them*, And *v.* 11. *Both he who ſanctifieth, and thoſe who are ſanctified, are all of one, wherefore he is not aſhamed to call them Brethren.* But I ſhall not inſiſt on this, which amounteth to no more than a *Fellowſhip* in one and the ſame common Nature; and thus, though there be this peculiar in it, that it was for the Spouſe's ſake, that he took upon him Humane Nature, (for I take that to be a *Romantick Fancy*, for which there is neither any Scripture, or ſound Reaſon, That if the World had not been to have been Redeemed, yet God would have ſent his Son to be Incarnate;) yet in this ſenſe he is in a ſenſe a Fellow to all the Sons and Daughters of Men. I ſhall therefore paſs over this, and come to ſhew you how Chriſt approveth himſelf as a *Fellow* or *Companion* to all thoſe who are true Believers.

You read in holy Writ, of *Fellow-Citizens*, and *Fellow-Heirs*, *Eph.* 2. 19. *Eph.* 3. 6. of *Fellow-helpers*, and *fellow-labourers*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 23. 1 *Theſ.* 3. 2. of *fellow priſoners*, and *fellow ſouldiers*, *Col.* 4. 10. *Philemon* 23. *Phil.* 2. 25. I think under one of theſe Heads, I may reduce whatſoever I need ſay for the opening of this Notion.

1. *Chriſt is with his Saints a Fellow-Citizen in the City of their God.* The City of God ſignifieth either the Church of God, or Heaven. Take it in either Notion, Chriſt is our Fellow-Citizen; he is the *Head of the Church*, Believers are the Members. The Head of the Body, and the other Members, make up but one Body; they are fellow-

fellow-members of the same Body. The Mayor of your City, tho the most dignified Citizen, yet is a Fellow-Citizen. The Saints are all *Fellow-Citizens*, *Eph.* 3. 6. Christ, though their Head, is their Fellow-Citizen; he calls them *Brethren*, *Heb.* 2. 11, 12. saying, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren; in the midst of the Church, I will sing praise unto thee.* Do Fellow-Citizens dwell in a *City compacted* together? Christ dwells in his Church: He walks in the midst of the *Golden Candlesticks*: He *dwelleth* in the Believing Soul; his dwelling-place is in *Zion*, *in his holy Mountain*, Zech. 2. 11. *I will dwell in the midst of thee.* He saith, He will make his abode with the Soul that *loveth him, and keepeth his Commandments; I in you, and you in me*, saith he, *Joh.* 15. He dwelleth in their hearts by Faith, *Eph.* 3. 17. His Spirit dwells in them, *Rom.* 8. 9. But the Notion of a *Fellow-Citizen* speaketh more than Cohabitation: A *Partnership in the same Rights and Priviledges.* So doth a *Co-heirship* speak a Partnership in the *same Enjoyments.* Thus Christ is their *Fellow-Citizen*, their *Fellow-Heir*; they are Partners with Christ in the same Priviledges, in the same Enjoyments. *Of his fulness they receive grace for grace.* And for the New *Jerusalem*, the City of God which is above, he hath willed them a Partnership with him in his glory, *Joh.* 17. 22. *And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.* Only there is this observable difference, *Fellow-Citizens*, and *Fellow-Heirs amongst men*, are Notions which denote an equality in *Priviledges* and *Enjoyments*, but not so between Christ and us. They are Heirs of the same *Grace with Christ*, 1 *Joh.* 16. *Of his fulness they receive grace for grace*: But with this difference; the People of God have the Spirit given by measure to them. To him the Spirit is not given by measure, *Joh.* 3. 34. The People of God have different measures, they have different measures of Faith, *Rom.* 12. 3. There is a *measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, *Eph.* 4. 13. This they ought to aim at, but none in this life attains it; they are Heirs of the same glory with Christ, *Joh.* 17. 22. but not of the same degrees of glory. His glory shall be the glory of the Sun; their's but as the *glory of the Stars*; they shall be where he is; they shall Reign with him, but in the Throne he shall be greater than they are; his glory shall be an *excelling glory.* The Apostle calls them *Heirs* and *Co-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ*, *Rom.* 8. 17. In this sense the Lord approveth himself their *Companion*, their *Fellow.*

2. *Christ* and his *Spouse* are *fellow-servants*, fellows in the *same work*,

work. What is the work of Believers, but to *glorifie God*? This is their great business. *Whether* (saith the Apostle) *you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, let all be done to the glory of God.* What was the work of Christ while he was upon the Earth? *Joh.* 17. 4. *I have glorified thee on the Earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.* Christ and his Disciples have in the general one and the same work, to *glorifie God.* Though, if we come to speak of the particular actions by which God is glorified by the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and by the Believer, there is a great deal of difference. Christ glorified his Father by performance of the acts of our Redemption, according to his Fathers Will, we by those good works which he hath commanded; yet in the general scope, *viz. the glorifying of God*, and the more *general mean* by which this general End is attained, *viz. obedience to the Will of God*, they are both the same; Christ glorified his Father, by *obedience to his Will*: The Child of God glorifieth God by obedience to his Will; both of them glorified God by the prædication of his Name, by praising him, *&c.* Christ took upon him the form of a Servant, and became obedient, *Phil.* 2. 7, 8. The Child of God is *by Birth a Servant*, and *by Covenant a Servant*; (there is that difference betwixt them) but they are both *Servants*, both obedient to the Will of God, and both by that *obedience* serve the great End of *glorifying God*, which justifieth the Notion, though the *Acts of their obedience* differ according to their several *spheres* and *stations*. In a great Family you know they are all fellow-servants, though some of them have a more, some a less noble Employment.

3. Christ is their *Fellow-worker*, their *Fellow-helper*, not only with reference to the Father, as they both work to the same End, and by the same general Means, *viz. obedience to the Will of God*, but as he worketh in them, and excites their habits of grace, and strengtheneth them in the exercise of them, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. 4. 13. *Without me you can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. *His Spirit helpeth our infirmities*, *Rom.* 8. 26, *συναντιλαμβάνεται*, it lifts over against them. The Child of God, without the *presence* and *assistance* of Christ, cannot pray a prayer, nor *hear a Sermon*, nor perform any spiritual duty; so as that Christ is not only to the Believer a *Fellow-labourer*, and *Fellow-servant*, doing the same work that they do, or at least having done the same work, but he is their *Fellow-helper* as to all their own spiritual *Motions* and *Actions*.

4. You in holy Scripture read of a *Fellow-Prisoner*, *Aristarchus*,

and *Epaphras*, are both of them called *Paul's Fellow-prisoners*, *Coloss.* 4. 14. You read also of a *Fellow-Souldier*, *Philip.* 2. *v.* 25. *Philemon* 2. This Notion signifieth one that is a Partner and Fellow to another in Conflicts, Combates, &c. a common Partnership in *hazards* and *sufferings*. In this sense our Lord properly calleth his Spouse (the *Believing Soul*) his *Fellow*. He fought and overcame the same Enemies with whom they daily fight. The Christian hath three great Enemies; the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*. It is true, Christ had none of the second to incounter; he was born without sin; he lived without sin; he *had no body of death*. But yet he had to die for our sins; all our sins were set in Battel Array against him; they were those which nailed him to the Cross, but he conquered, and declared his *Conquest*, by his *Resurrection from the dead*. The World is our Enemy, one of those Enemies against which we are to maintain the Spiritual Fight. It was also his Enemy, he fought against it, and overcame it, *Joh.* 16. 33. —*Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World*. The *Devil* is another of our great Enemies, against whom we are commanded to put on the whole Armour of God, Christ overcame him also, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15. *Through death he destroyed him who had the power of death, even the Devil*. And the same Apostle in the same Epistle tells us, that he was therefore tempted, that *he might be able to succour those that are tempted*. The Apostle mentioneth Christ in this Notion, when he calleth him, *The Captain of our Salvation*. It is long since that he let his People know by his Prophet *Isaiah*, that *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*. He took himself concerned in the persecution of his Church, and therefore calleth from Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me*. Indeed it is not easie to determine what kind of *Sympathy* the most perfect Nature of Christ is capable of, but that he is their *Fellow-sufferer*, the Scripture plainly determineth. Thus you see, that it is not in a complement that Jesus Christ speaking to his Saints, speaks to them in this dialect; *Thou that art my Fellow*.

But our Translation reads it, *O my Love*; and the word, as I before shewed you, is also so translated properly enough. A Friend hath this name in the *Hebrew*, because he is always the companion and associate of his correlated Friend. Hence we translate it, *My Love*; and conformably to this our Lord speaketh, *Joh.* 15. 14. *You are my Friends, if you do whatsoever I have commanded you*. And again, *v.* 15. *Henceforth I call you not Servants, I call you Friends*. Let us a little inquire how Christ approveth himself a *Believers Friend*. Friendship speaketh 4 things.

1. *Love.*

1. *Love.* 2. *Free and ingenuous love.* 3. *Mutual*, and *reciprocal Love.* 4. *Mutual communion* and *converse each with other.* 1. *It Speaketh Love. Amicus ab amando.* This is so obvious to every one that either understandeth any thing of the *Revelation* or *History* of *holy Writ*, that it will need very few words to demonstrate. Besides the frequent friendly compellations which Christ hath given his *People*, whoso considereth his conjunction with his Father in the *Eternal Purposes* for their Salvation, and all those means by which they are made meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light; his concern in the *Eternal Covenant* of *Redemption* and of *Grace*, in which he became a Surety for them; his taking upon him humane Nature, walking up and down in our flesh, Dying upon the Cross for us sinners; his resurrection from the dead for their justification; his ascending up into Heaven, and giving Gifts unto men, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints; his sending his Spirit to convince the World of sin, righteousness and Judgment; his daily influence upon his People, strengthening, quickening, and comforting of them; his being their advocate with the Father, in case both of Sins and duties; his passionate expressions while he was on the Earth for the conversion of Souls; his intreating them by his Ministers, as his Embassadors, that they would be reconciled to God; the charge that he hath given the World against offending them; his declarations of his coming to judge the World, to render tribulation to them that trouble them, and to them Rest and Peace: I say he that considereth any of these things, much less, all of them together, must say that *he loved* them with an *Everlasting, unchangeable Love*; alone suted to all the necessities of his poor Creatures, and that he hath willed them good suitable to all their Evils.

2. Secondly, Friendship speaketh *free and ingenuous Love.* Not the Love of a *Child* to a *Father* which is Natural, & to which he is obliged by a filial duty because of his Fathers care of, and *provision* for him; not the Love of a *Servant*, which is purchased by a kind usage, and dependance. A *friend* loveth freely. The Love of true Friends, is ordinarily an inaccountable thing. They love one another, and can hardly give one another an account of it, further than a goodness, and excellency, a suitableness, and likeness which they discern, or at least think they see each in other. Christs Love to us is free. *He loveth our backslidings and loveth us freely. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.* The reciprocal Love of the believing Soul is not so free and so ingenuous, as is his beloveds love to him.

Yet it is thus far ingenuous, that it is not only for that the Soul hath from Christ, but for that goodness, and excellency which it discerneth in Christ; this we had before, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, therefore do the Virgins Love thee.*

3. Love properly doth not make a friend unless it be *mutual, and reciprocal.* Indeed in a large sense, a man may be said to be a *friend to his Enemy*: That is, to wish well to him, and to do him some kind Offices. But this is not *friendship.* All *Friendship*, implyeth a *reciprocation of Love.* Christ *Loves the believer*, and every *true* believer *loveth Christ.* So they are Friends, in the strictest, and most proper sense. Indeed there is a great difference which is well expressed by one of the Casuists thus: "We will good to him, but we "do not bestow that good upon him, which we will him: But "he while he willeth good to us, also giveth us that good which "he willeth, and by his loving us maketh us good, and lovely. But every Child of God truly loveth Christ; truly I say, that is, *sincerely* though not with that kind or degree of Love with which Christ loveth him. *Lord* (saith *Peter*) *thou that knowest all things, knowest that I Love thee.* And *If any man Loves not the Lord Jesus* (saith the Apostle) *let him be Anathema Maranatha.*

Tolet. in Cas. l. 4. c. 8.

4. Lastly, *Love of friendship alwaies speaketh Communion betwixt the two Lovers.* We are bound to Love our Enemies, and in every good man there is such a Love, even to those that hate them; but this is no Love of friendship, for the Precept of *Love to Enemies*, obligeth onely against *malice and private Revenge*, and to common Offices of kindness, it doth not oblige to intimacy, or to any *near fellowship*, and *Communion* with them. We are so far obliged to Love our Enemies, as to bear no malice against them, to take no *private Revenge* upon them, to be ready to do any acts of kindness for their Souls, and any common offices of love. But I say we are not by it obliged to make them our intimates nor to keep any fellowship or communion with them. But in a *Love of friendship*, there is alwaies Communion, or a mutual Communication of the Parties loving each to others. Christ gives this account of his love of friendship to his disciples, *John* 15. 15. *Henceforth I call you not Servants, for the Servant knoweth not what his Lord doth, but I have called you Friends, for all things I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.* Christ Communicates himself to *believers*, to such as are his disciples indeed, he is in them, they in him, and he is daily Communicating of his life, and strength to them, for,

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John 15. 4. *Without him, they can do nothing.* They are daily communicating themselves unto him, making a secret surrender to him, of *their hearts*, their *wills*, their affections. Communicating their *wants* and *desires* to him by *Prayer*, &c. Thus I have justified the notion of Christs *Love*, his *friend*, his Companion, to be agreeable, to what the Scripture revealeth concerning Christ, and the believing Soul.

This in the first place leadeth us into a *just admiration*, of the *Divine Love*, and *condescension*. Who is this that calleth from Heaven to Earth, to the Worms of the Earth, and speaketh in this language, *My Love*! *My Friend*! *My Fellow*! Is it not he who is the Eternal Son of God, God over all blessed for ever, he to whom there is none like, and besides whom there is no God? He whom God calleth his fellow, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father. And to whom doth he speak? Is it not to those who must say to corruption, *thou art my Mother*, and to the Worms, *you are my brethren and my Sisters*? To those whose Fathers are *Amorites*, and whose Mothers are *Hittites*, who by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, unclean Children of unclean Parents. Will the Lord Love such *Ethiopians*, as we are by nature? Such Enemies, as we have shewed our selves by practice? Will the Lord make himself a companion to the creature, that is but as the dust of his feet? What manner of Love and condescension is this? For him whom the Eternal Father hath proclaimed to be his Son, and that Son in whom he is well pleased in whom the Lord hath set up his rest; he whom *Kings and Prophets* desired to see, whom *Angels* and glorified Saints adore, to whom the Father hath given a name above every name, he who hath Heaven for his throne, the Earth for his footstool, and the utmost ends of the Earth for his possession to say to us, *My Love, My Friend, My Companion*? Certainly these terms ought to ravish our hearts, and to affect them with inexpressible admiration; and to whom doth he say thus? Is it only to the *Glories* and *beauties* of the World? To the *Emperors*, *Kings*, *Princes* and Nobles thereof? No; he saith thus to every believer, even the meanest that treadeth upon the Earth, to the most poor, distressed, afflicted creature, to *Job* that sits upon a dunghill scraping himself with a potsheard, to *Lazarus* that lyeth at the rich mans gate full of sores, and begging bread, while the Dogs lick his sores, to the pooreſt

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poorest believer living in the meanest and dirtiest Cottage, to those whom the World revileth, slighteth, scorneth, to those who have spit in his face, and abused his patience, and despised his goodness, that have hardened their hearts against him, grieved his holy Spirit. Yet having repented of these things and being turned to him, to these he calleth, to these he saith, *My Love, My Friends, My Companions!* He upbraideth them not for their former miscarriages, to these he becometh a fellow Prisoner, in these he becomes a fellow helper, these shall be joint heirs with him. *Hear O Heavens! be astonished O Earth,* never was Love like this, never such matchless Love. Let all our Souls swallow up themselves in this gulph of unfathomable Love, and while we are sinking let us cry out, O *the height, and depth, and length, and breadth* of the Love *of God in Jesus Christ*, It is a condescension beyond the grasp of our faith. The greatness of it causeth in us a difficulty to believe it. Who is a God like our God, a *Saviour* a *Redeemer*, an *Husband* like our Saviour, our Redeemer our Spiritual Husband? When they told *David*, that he should have *Michal* the Daughter of *Saul* to Wife, and persuaded him to it; Seemeth it to you (saith he) *a small thing to be a Son-in-law to a King?* If there be any of you not affected with this Love, this transcendent Love, give me leave to speak to you in the language of *David*; Seemeth it to you a small thing, to be the beloved, the friends, the companions of the Lord Jesus Christ? Ah! That I could send you away this day, admiring the divine Love, that he should take the *fellowship* of our nature upon him, that he should make us his *fellow Citizens*, admit us to a fellowship with him both in grace here, and in glory hereafter, that he should be our *Companion* in tribulation, our Companion *in labour*, and *fellow Soldier*. But I leave this to be further improved by you in your more private meditations.

Use 2. 2. Secondly, This notion is of wonderful use *to relieve, and comfort the People of God under all their present afflictions or fears of greater*. The face of things as to Gods People hath been a long time gathering blackness and there is this day a great blackness. Prisons in the Primitive times were more the habitations of Gods People then Palaces, God grant we may not see them to be so again; we have been so used to beds of Feathers & Down, that the thoughts of a bed of straw make us shrink, so wedded to our

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own Country, that a ſtrange land appeareth to us a ſtrange thing. The Providence of God looketh as if it were preparing Priſons, and Fetters, and baniſhments for his People and the hearts of Gods People are every where as ſad as the times. What a wonderful comfort and relief to the People of God at ſuch a time is it for them, to hear the Lord Jeſus Chriſt calling them his Companions. His Companions in tribulation, and to call himſelf their fellow Souldier and *fellow Priſoner*. There are a great many arguments with which the ſuffering Servants of God may be relieved; *Fear none of thoſe things which thou ſhalt ſuffer* (ſaid the *Angel* to the *Church* at Smyrna) *Behold the Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that you may be tryed, and you ſhall have tribulation that you might be tryed, and you ſhall have tribulation for ten days*, *Rev.* 2. 10. There are ſeveral arguments, 1. *It is the Devil that caſt Saints into Priſon.* He doth it by men as his inſtruments, but he filleth them with their *rage and malice*, 2. *It is that they may be tryed.* God permits it, the Devil could have no power againſt a believer more then againſt Chriſt, if God did not permit it. The Devil and his inſtruments deſigne to ruin and to deſtroy them, Gods end is to try them. 3. It ſhall be *but a tribulation* for *ten days*, a ſhort time. *The rod of the wicked ſhall not always reſt upon the lot of the righteous.* Well, but how ſhall they hold out theſe ten days? See *Iſaiah.* 43. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord that created thee, O* Jacob, *and he that formed thee, O* Iſrael, *Fear not, for I have Redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine. When thou paſſeſt through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt through the fires thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.* In the ten days of tribulation, the Child of God ſhall not be alone, he that Redeemed them, *will be with them.* This was made good to the three Children in the fiery fornace in *Babylon*, Dan. 3. 24. *Did not we caſt three men bound into the midſt of the fire?* (ſaith *Nebuchadnezzar*) *lo I ſee four men looſe walking in the middeſt of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* He was with *Daniel*, *Daniel* 9. 22. With *Paul* and *Silas*, *Acts*, 16. They could never elſe have ſang in the Priſon at midnight. Let the People of God lift up their heads as *Moſes ſeeing him who is invisible.* Only take the caution of *Peter*, 1. *Pet.* 4. *Let none of you ſuffer as a Murderer, or as a Thief, or*

as an Evil doer, or as a busy body in other mens matters. But if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. Let men look that they *suffer for righteousness sake*, that is, to avoid sinning against God, (all such suffering is for righteousnes sake) then they shall never be alone. *Saul, Saul why* (saith Christ) *persecutest thou me*, calling out of Heaven to *Paul*, when he was in his full carreer of persecution of the Church. No man can expect, that Christ should be a companion to him in his tribulation while he suffereth meetly for his *stomach*, or out of *humour*, much less if he suffereth for doing that which is plainly sinful and which he ought not to have done, but if he suffereth to avoid sin against God, to keep himself unspotted from the World, as he is made a partaker of Christs sufferings, so Christ will be a partaker of his sufferings, his Companion in suffering, and whensoever Christs glory shall be revealed, he shall be glad with exceeding joy. It is a marvelous sweet notion to suffering Christians, to hear that Jesus Christ is, and will be their Companion in sufferings; fear not therefore Christians! in despight of evil men, and evil times, to keep a good Conscience, but *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy, when you fall into diverse temptations.* A good Conscience was yet never in Prison alone. Nor will this be strange to us if we consider, that even death it self, though it makes Soul and Body part Company, yet it doth not make Christ and a believer part Company. Our Bodies shall be raised from the Grave, *by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us*, *Rom.* 8. 11. There are two great arguments amongst others to comfort the People of God in all their *noons of Afflictions*, 1. That even then they are *Christs fellows*. They then are in the *fellowship of his death*, Phil. 4. 10, 11. They *suffer with him*, Rom. 8. 17. They are *made conformable to his death*, Christ is *magnified in their body*. They make up what is lacking in the *sufferings of Christ*, 2. *That Christ will then be their fellow*; it is to the Spouse at *Noon*, that he saith here, *O My Love, My Fellow!* &c. When the World is spitting their Venom, shewing their utmost Malice and hatred, even then Christ is calling to them and saying, *My Love*. When the World is casting them out as *Pestilent fellows*, then is Christ saying unto them, *My Companions!* Then will he be with them, and manifest himself as a friendly Companion to them.

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In the third place, How *should this raise up the hearts of Christians above all discouragements, as to hard and difficult duties.* O saith a Christian. This is an hard saying, who can hear it, a difficult duty, how shall I ever perform it? how shall I ever get up my heart to it? Put to thy hand Christian, thou canst do nothing of thy self, but thou mayest do all things through Christ that strengtheneth thee, what cannot Christ and thou do together? I live, saith *Paul, Gal.* 2. 20. *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.* Remember Christ hath called thee *fellow*, and why? Because he is thy *fellow helper* in *duty* as well as thy fellow Prisoner, and fellow Souldier in all thy sufferings. Only do not like a *Sluggard*, lye down, and stand still, and cry, *there is a lion in the way. Isa.* 41. 10. (Saith God) *Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee, with the right hand of my righteousness,* v. 13. *I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, for I will help thee.* It is Christians great fault, they pore upon themselves, and discourage themselves from their own natural impotencies and insufficiencies, and do not consider that their fruit is found in Christ, and all their strength also laid up and found in him, and to be derived from him.

Fourthly, Doth Christ say to us, *My Love?* And shall not we say to him, *My Beloved!* shall not we Love the Lord Jesus Christ, and compleat *this Love of friendship?* It is said that when Christ was going with his disciples to *Emaus their hearts burn'd within them, while they heard him talking by the way.* Have not your hearts burned within you, while you have heard Jesus Christ speaking to you in this dialect? *My, Love, My Fellow, If you Love them that Love you* (saith our Lord, *Matth.* 5.) *What reward have you? even the Publicans do so.* O Love the Lord Jesus Christ all you his Saints, for he loveth you, and that too with the greatest, and most unmeasurable love. Use 4.

Is Christ our *Companion? let us not grudg then to be his Companions, and let us behave our selves towards him as towards a Companion, and such a Companion.* This learneth us several things. Use 5.

1. It learneth us what is *our constant work and duty, viz.* To *Glorify God by doing the work which God hath given us to do, by*

manifesting his name to those whom God hath given us. This was Christs work, he went up and down doing good, saith the Evangelist. This was Christs work, this should be our work, we should be thinking every morning, how should I glorify Christ this day? How may I shew my self this day a *Companion in labour* to my great Lord and Master? this we cannot do by making our selves Companions of fools, nor meer Companions of worldly men, but by being the Companions of those that fear the Lord.

2. It learneth us our duty, to be *couragious*, valiant in fight, striving against sin, *confident of Victory* over all our *Spiritual Enemies*. Of these I have spake before. We should also in consideration of this use Christ as our *Companion*, and behave our selves towards him as to our Companion, and as to such a Companion, as he is. I shall direct in that in two or three particulars, 1. *Be no Companion to Christs Enemies.* David saith, *Psal.* 119.63. *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee, Psal.* 119. 63. *Solomon* telleth us, That a *Companion of fools shall be destroyed Prov.* 13. 20. Who those fools are you may read, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. *Revel.* 21. 8. All such as shall *never enter into the Kingdom of* God, such as shall be destroyed in the lake that burns with fire, and brimstone, are fools with a witness. No Companion to these can shew himself a Companion to Jesus Christ: *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 28. 7. A *Companion of riotous men shameth his Father.* He that is a *Companion*, an ordinary Company, to loose and profane men, *Drunkards, Swearers, Blasphemers, profane Swearers, and cursers*, and professeth to be a Companion of Christ shameth Christ to whom he pretendeth to be a Companion. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph.* 5. 11. If you have see what the same Apostle saith, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. *What fellowship can righteousness* and *light* have with you? The Gentleman abhorreth his Mistris that makes herself a Companion to ever Tapster and Porter. 2. *Be you much in company with Christ. Fellows*, and *lovers* use to be so, they are never well but when they are so. *Frequent Communion with God*, is like the frequent meetings, and converses of lovers, which ripen things apace for the wedding day. The Soul that is much with Christ in *Soliloquies* and *meditations*, much in *Prayer*, ripeneth apace for glory, for the great *marriage of the Lamb.* Much communion with God, hath these two eminent advantages. God is by

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it much indeared to the Soul and the Soul is again reciprocally much endeared to God by it.

2. *When thou art in communion with Christ be not Idle.* A man may be in his ſtudy, and do nothing of moment; a Child may attruant in the School: *Domitian*, may be killing flyes in his *Councel-Chamber.* A Soul may loſe that time that it pretends to ſpend with Chriſt. Spend this hallowed part of your time, as Lovers, and Companions uſe to do.

1. In *imparting your ſecrets unto Chriſt*: Your ſecret wants, doubts, fears, deſires, not concealing your moſt ſecret thoughts from the Lord.

2. *In wooing of your beloved*: Begging his love and favour, crying out to him with the Spouſe, *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth. Draw me, and we will run after thee. Tell me O thou whom my* Soul *loveth! where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at Noon.*

3. *In mutual embraces*: The embraces of *faith* and *love. I held him* (ſaith the Spouſe) *and would not let him go.* Put the hand of faith about the neck of your beloved, it is a Chain from which he cannot, from which he will not get looſe. But I have dwelt long enough upon the compellation in the Text, [*my Love* or *my Fellow*] I ſhould now come to the matter of my text, *I have compared thee to a company of Horſes in* Pharaoh's *Chariots.* But of that hereafter.

Sermon XLVIII.

Canticles 1. 9.

I have likened thee (O my Love!) to a company of Horſes in Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

I Am come to the ſecond *Propoſition* I obſerved from theſe words: I have done with the firſt raiſed from the *Compellation.*

Prop. *Chriſt hath likened his Spouſe to a company of Horſes in* Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

I shall speak to this Proposition in my usual method, by way of *Explication, Confirmation*, and *Application*. By way of Explication I shall shew you, 1. *In what sense* that term, *I have likened*, or *I have compared thee*, is to be understood. 2. *Why Christ hath likened his Spouse to Horses*, to a *company of Horses*, and why to a *company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*.

As to the first, the only question is, Whether the sense be, *I have made thee like*, or *I have fancied thee like*; the *Radical* word דמה signifieth to *be like*, or to *assimilate*. I find it frequently in Scripture used in *Pibel*, the very Conjugation in which it is used in this Text. From some of those Texts we may possibly gather the sense of it in this Text, *Numb.* 15.35. *I will do unto them as I thought to do unto them.* There it is translated, *I thought*, Isa. 14.24. *As I have thought, so have I brought it to pass*, Judg. 20.5. *The men of* Gibeah---*thought to slay me*, Psal. 48.9. *We have thought of thy loving kindness*, Hos. 12.10. *I have used similitudes*, Lam. 2.13. *To what shall I liken thee?* The word is in Scripture often used to signifie the making *Idea's* and *Representations* of things in our minds. No man does any action but he first makes the *Idea* and Platform of it in his thoughts: Now this action of the mind informing the *Idea* or *Platform* of a thing, is that which is expressed by this word. In short, the word may signifie either; *I have made thee like*, or *I have in my mind fancied*, or *conceived thee like*; so it either denotes a *gracious act of Christ* terminated in us, or an action of Christ *terminated in himself*. In the first sense it signifies, Christ's induing of his Spouse with some noble and generous qualities, bearing some proportion to those that are found in an Horse. In the second sense it is rather expressive of some duty in the Spouse proceeding from such Endowments. In the Text the latter must include the former. For he who draweth the *similitude*, is one who cannot err in his Judgment. We may have Fancies that are vain, and our minds may conceive of things otherwise than indeed they are. He cannot conceive his Spouse like to a company of Horses, if indeed she were not so, He could not be deceived with a false Representation of any Object. I think it no vain conjecture of some Interpreters of this Text, that our Saviour addeth these words, with some reference to the Spouse's Petition immediately preceding. She had begg'd to to be directed how in the Noon of her afflicted state, when the Sun of Tryals and Persecutions beated hot on her, she might enjoy a free, full Communion with him; he had bidden her to *go forth by*

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the footsteps of the Flock, to follow the steps of those who before had walked with God under the darker dispensations of his Providence. Now, lest she should shrink at the thoughts of Trials, he goes on, and tells her, he had made her like, and looked upon her as like to an *Horse*, yea a *company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*. But,

1. *Why doth our Saviour compare his Spouse to Horses?* We would in our Age think it a strange Complement for a man to use to the woman whom he loved. But we must remember, that a great deal is to be allowed in the different Dialect of several Nations, in different Ages, as we see is to Persons in the same Age living at an hundred years distance each from other. There are many Phrases which an hundred or two years ago were good English, and good sense, which in our more Polite and Reformed Age we should now judge very ordinary course Language. *Elijah* you know was called by the King of *Israel*, *The Chariots of* Israel, *and the Horsemen thereof*; all that was meant, was the *honour*, and *strength*, and *defence* of the Nation. So *Zech.* 10. 3. It is said, God had visited his Flock, and made them like a goodly Horse in Battel. And *Rev.* 19. 11, 14. Christ is described as *riding upon a white Horse*, and *his Army on white Horses*. The Spouse is here compared to *Horses*, a company of Horses, only for some eminent quality, or qualities in Horses. Nor is our own Dialect free from such comparisons. We say of a man without disparagement, *He is as strong as an Horse*. Nor is this similitude improper, whether we consider, 1. *The generous qualities of that creature*: Or, 2. *The general repute and value which some of that Species have*, especially with some Persons. The *Hebrew Doctors* reckon up seven Qualities of an Horse, but they reckon good and bad Qualities together. 1. It is a *goodly creature*. 2. It is a *docible creature*, easily to be taught several things. 3. It is a *martial* valiant creature. 4. It is a *swift creature*. 5. It is a very *laborious useful creature*. I do not think that all these are intended in this Text, because it is not said, I have likened thee to an *Horse*, but *to a company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*. There are two or three of them which may be intended, and it is questionable which of them is principally intended.

1. *An Horse is a goodly creature*. You read of a *goodly Horse*, *Zech.* 10. 3. We take a great delight to look upon some Horses whose Limbs are well proportioned, and which have been well managed. An Horse is very comely above a Swine, or an Ox, or any neat Cattel: And usually Horses used in Coaches and Chariots, (especially

(especially Princes Chariots) are of the most goodly and comely sort. If we should take it in this sense, it signifies Christ's high Opinion of his Church, and every Believing Soul. He had before called her, *The fairest amongst Women*, here he compareth her to *goodly Horses*. This is *Beza's*, and some other Learned Interpreters Notion of the *Metaphor* in the Text. The *stature* and talness of the Woman, and just proportion of her Limbs one to another (saith he) addeth much unto her beauty. Horses (upon those accounts) are very lovely, beautiful creatures; but besides that, I have discoursed before the beauty and comeliness of the Spouse, I must confess I incline with several other Interpreters rather to another sense of it in this Text.

2. An Horse is a very *swift creature*. There are indeed other creatures in other Countries that are more swift of foot than an Horse, but none of ordinary use that are swifter of foot. *Deodate* thus interprets the *Metaphor*, and there is a truth in it. God puts into his People a Spirit of life and activity, so as they are *swift to hear*, James 1. 19. *ready to every good work*. We read in Scripture of Horses *swifter than Leopards*, *Hab.* 1. 8. But I do not think this principally intended in this place, and it seemeth too much a straining of the Metaphor.

3. And lastly, Therefore the Horse is a *strong and valiant creature*. God himself propoundeth the Horse as a pattern of strength, *Job* 32. 19. *Hast thou given unto the Horse his strength?* And it is said of God, that *he delighteth not in the strength of an Horse*, *Psal.* 147. 10. And as the Horse is a creature of strength, so it is a creature of a great spirit and courage; *He rusheth into the Battel, and is not afraid*, *Jer.* 8. 6. God speaking to *Job* concerning the Horse, giveth an excellent and elegant description of him, *Job* 39. 19, 20. where God asketh *Job*, *Hast thou clothed his neck with Thunder? Canst thou make him afraid at a Grashopper? The glory of his Nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the Valley, and rejoyceth in his strength. He goeth on to meet the armed man, he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the Sword. The Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear, and the Shield, he swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth he that it is the sound of the Trumpet. He saith amongst the Trumpets, Ha, Ha, and he smelleth the Battel afar off, the Thunder of the Captains, and the shoutings.* With respect of this Quality of the Horse I conceive it is, that the *Spouse* is here compared to *Horses*; War-like Horses, full of spirit and courage. I *have likened thee to a company of Horses*; That

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is, I have made thee *bold, couragious, full of resolution*, to make a spiritual resistance to thy Enemies, to bid a defiance to them, no more to regard the *reproaches* and revilings, the threats, and rage, and violences of wicked men that oppose thee, and cause thy trouble, than the Horse regardeth the *rattlings of the Quiver*, or the *sound of the Trumpet*, or the *glittering Spear* or Shield. Fear not the rage and madness of thy Enemies. I have made thee like to the Horses in *Pharaoh's* Chariots, which are so bred, and so spirited, that they mock at fear; and the more their Enemies rage and make a noise, the more couragiously, and with the more mettle they go on. This I take to be the most proper and likely sense of the *Metaphor* in this Text; accordingly I shall handle it.

2. But it is not said, *To an Horse* only, but to a *company of Horses*: Why to a company of Horses? The term company denotes *Multitude* and *Unity*. 1. It denotes *Multitude*. The Church of Christ consists of many *Individual Believers*, who in respect of their Innocency, and feeding in the same Pastures, are compared sometimes to a Flock of Sheep here in respect of that spirit of *valour, courage*, and *fortitude* which animates them all, to a *company of Horses*.

2. It is a term which denotes *Unity*, not a numerical Unity, but an Unity in some *common work*, and in some accidents common to them all. Thus the Apostle saith, *We being many are one body*. There is, saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 4. 4, 5. *one Body, one Spirit*, they are *called in one Hope, of their Calling*, they have *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*, they have *one God* and *Father of all*. The Spouse is not compared to a *company of Horses in a field*, or in the streets, but to a *company of Horses in a Chariot*, where they *draw together*, run together upon the Enemy. Every Believer also hath a *Company* within himself, the several *powers* and *faculties* of his Soul armed with the whole Armour of God. These are like a *company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*.

3. But why in *Pharaoh's Chariots*. *Pharaoh* was a common name to the *Kings of Egypt*, and a *company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots*, signifieth no more than a company of the best *Egyptian Horses*. *Egypt* at that time was one of the most famous places for *Horses* in the world. Hence you read that *Solomon* had Horses brought out of *Egypt*, 1 *King.* 10. 28. And the King of *Judah sent his Embassadors into* Egypt, *that they might give him Horses*, *Ezek.* 17. 15. So *Isa.* 31. 1. *Woe to them that go down to* Egypt *for help, and stay on Horses.*

Horses. v. 3. *Their Horses are flesh, and not spirit.* So as I think they have but a feeble support from this Text, who would make advantage of this Text to justify their notion, that this Divine portion of holy Writ is no more but a *Love-song* betwixt *Solomon* and *Pharaohs* Daughter.

To all this I might add one thing more, that the *Horse* by reason of those excellent qualities, which the God of nature hath endued it with, hath in all ages been *in a very high esteem with men.* The vanity of some Persons in the expression of this hath been very great. Historians tell us, the *Persians* made solemn funerals for their Horses; in other places they builded *Pyramids* over their Sepulchers. *Alexander* the great, built a City to the memory of his Horse. *Julius Cæsar* set up his Horse a marble *effigies.* The Emperour *Commodus*, would have his Horse buried in the *Vatican.* Our age is more rational, then to allow these vanities, but yet it is vain enough, many a man takes more care for the mangery of his Horse then for the *Education* of his Child, and alloweth his Horses more attendance then his wife. Which lets us see what a value men yet put upon this creature. So as this sense may be put upon the Words of this Text, *thou art as dear to me, and in as high esteem with me, as the Horses in* Pharaohs *Chariots are to, and with him.* The Proposition then of the Text amounteth to this:

Prop. *That the Church of Christ, and every particular believer in it, is in Christs Eyes exceeding lovely, and highly esteemed of by him, and knowing that she is in the midst of Enemies he hath cloathed her with strength for the victory sufficient if she will make use of it;* he hath made her like to a *Company of Horses in* Pharaohs *Charrots.*

The proof of the Proposition then lyeth in the proof of these two things.

1. *That the Spouse of Christ is in his Eyes exceeding goodly, and beautiful, and highly esteemed of by him.*

2. *That she is cloathed with sufficient strength and might to overcome her Enemies.*

For the proof of the former, I shall not insist upon it, for besides the large discourse I have already spent upon that, when I handled that phrase (*O thou fairest amongst women*) The expressions of Scripture are so obvious to every Eye, where Christ setteth out his Love to, and esteem of his Church, and

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every particular-believer, that I need not spend time in giving you an account of them.

The latter is no less plain, Immediately upon the fall God gave out this promise, *Gen.* 3. 15. *The seed of the woman shall break thine head,* and *thou shalt bruise his heel.* The seed of the woman was Christ, and his seed, those that believe in him. Conformable to this is that promise, *Rom.* 16. 20. *God shall bruise Sathan under your feet shortly.* It was an ancient promise made to *Abraham,* and in him to all that walk in the *steps of his faith, Thy seed shall possess the gates of its Enemies,* God saith, *Zech.* 10. 3. *That he made his flock as a goodly Horse in the day of battel,* v. 5. *And they shall be as mighty men which tread down the Enemies as mire in the streets; in the battel they shall fight, because the Lord is with them.* I come to the *Application.*

I shall only apply it by *Exhortation* to two great duties; *Fortitude* and *unity.* I begin with the first, upon which I shall most inlarge, as to which I shall shew you, 1. *Wherein it lies,* and discourse it to you as it stands distinguished from a *natural Spirit,* and *stomack.* 2. *From a moral fortitude.* 2. I shall offer you some directions in order to the promoving of it. 3. *Lastly* I shall press it by some arguments. Use 1.

It is agreed on all hands that the object of it is *dangers* and *sufferings:* That the nature of it lyeth in a bold encountring, and going through them: That the vices opposed to it are. 1. *Cowardise.* 2. *Rashness,* or fool hardiness, as we call it. There is a *courage* or *fortitude* which ariseth only from the *natural Spirit* and courage of the creature. Now this is to be found in beasts as much as in men, yea and more then in men, the reflections of whose reason makes them less Spiritful then *Horses,* or *Dogs,* or *Lions,* &c. This commendeth no man, for no man hath more of this then many Beasts have. So it removeth not man at any distance from a Brute Creature. Secondly. There is a *moral fortitude.* Which though it must have some foundation in nature, for none that is naturally fearful, and cowardly, will by reason be improved to any degree of valour, yet differeth from the other. As it ariseth from knowledge, and some just improvement of reason, and is governed by the dictates of reason, and directed to some noble, and rational end, such now as the preservation of our honour or Country, *&c.* But now Christian fortitude is quite another thing as it ariseth,

1. From a threefold principle of grace, 2. As it is directed by the rule of the Word. 3. As it is exercised upon and against sin; As lastly it works for a more noble end, the glory of God, and the Salvation of the Soul, you may take this Description of it:

It is an habit infused into the Soul by the holy Spirit of God inabling the Soul, from the dread of the Eternal God, a Love to him, and a faith in him, and his promises, to despise the prospect, or presence of any danger, in a resistance and fighting against sin, and all temptations to it, governing it self by the rule of Gods Word, in order to the glory of God, and the Salvation of a mans Soul. From hence may easily be gathered, both how it differeth from *Natural Spirit* and *stomackfulness* which is under no government, either of reason or Religion, and is a mere natural quality, and found in beasts, as much, and more then in man.

It also differeth from *Moral fortitude*, both in the *Principle*, the rule, and manner of its exercise, and the End. All which I shall open. I shall begin with the first of these.

1. The first Principle of *Christian Fortitude* is the *holy Spirit*. *Fear not* saith God, *I will strengthen thee, and uphold thee with the hand of my righteousness.* It is indeed God as the God of Nature that puts the natural Spirit and courage into the Horse, or other beasts, *Job.* 32. 19. *Hast thou* (saith God) *given strength to the Horse; Hast thou clothed his neck with Thunder?* But here God acts as the Author of saving grace. The holy Spirit is the Author of all gracious habits, now there is a threefold *Spiritual habit*, from which this *fortitude* or Christian courage proceeds; they are as it were the Parents of it.

1. The first is the *fear of God*. No man is valiant against sin, when temptations to it lye from great dangers, but he that hath a true dread of God in, and upon his heart. It is said of *Moses*, *Hebr.* 11. 27. *That by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the King, for he indured, as seeing him who is invisible.* He forsook Egypt in obedience to the command of God, he feared not the wrath of the King. When he saw he must either incur the Kings wrath, or Gods displeasure, he feared not the wrath of the King, though (as *Solomon* saith) *The wrath of the King is as the Messenger of death*: Yet he feared not the wrath of the King, here now was courage; here was Christian Fortitude: Whence was it that he was so courageous? The Text tells you,

you, *He indured, as seeing him who was invisible*, he had the dread of the King of Kings upon his Soul, *agnovit imperatorem coeli*, he knew there was one, that *was higher then the highest* mortal; and this is necessary, and that too in a very good degree to every Soul that is valiant for God. Every Person that feareth not God will be a coward in the Spiritual fight.

2. A Second habit contributing to this *fortitude* or *Christian courage*, is *The Love of God*. The Apostle tells you it *constrains*; we see in daily experience, the lover will indure no dishonour to be done unto, no affront to be put upon the woman that he loveth. The vain Gentleman is ready to fight upon any such account. The Soul which truly loveth God, will suffer no affront, no dishonour which he can help, to be done unto, and put upon God, much less can he allow his own Soul in any such thing, what ever be the consequent of it.

3. A third habit from which this *Christian courage* or *fortitude* ariseth is *Faith*: *Faith* respecting both the *Proposition of the Word*, and the *promise of the Gospel*, and *Person of the Mediatour*. Faith agreeing to all which the holy Scripture revealeth concerning the *wrath of God*, his power, justice greatness, concerning the reward of those who well fight the good fight, who overcome, *&c.* And also hoping, and trusting in God for the *fulfilling* of those promises. *Natural courage* is much from Nature, and derives much from the *Blood*, *Moral Fortitude* deriveth much from *Education* and *Reason*. Christian Fortitude in encountring dangers ariseth from quite different principles. The Christian is *stout* and *valiant* in the *resistance of sin*, because he *feareth* the *great* and *living God*, whose *wrath* is a thousand times more formidable then the wrath of the greatest man, who when he hath *killed the body can do no more*, God can *cast both body* and *Soul into Hell-Fire*. Because he *loveth God*, and will suffer any thing, rather than grieve and offend him, and because he *believeth*, whatsoever God hath revealed in his holy Word concerning the greatness, power, wrath, and justice of God against sin, and concerning those who strive in the resistance of it. Hence you read in that *martyrology* which you have *Heb.* 11. 33. That they *through faith subdued Kingdoms*, —*v.* 34. *quenched the violence of fire*, *escaped the edge of the sword*, —waxed valiant in the fight, v. 35. they were *tortured*, not *accepting deliverance*, *v.* 36. *they had Trials of cruel mockings*,

and Scourgings, yea moreover of bonds, and imprisonment, &c. The principles of the Christian valour, are not meer *Natural Spirit* and *stomackfulness*, nor meer principles of *honour*, and *reputation*, and *reason*, which were the principles of the *Roman* valour, but these which I have shewed you.

2. As to the *Acts of it*. They are all *lawful resistances of sin*. He will resist *unto blood*, but it still is in *striving against sin*, *Heb.* 12. 4. And this he doth by a *Lawful resistance*; This in the description I called a *governing himself according to the rules of Gods Word*, 2 Tim. 2 5. *If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.* All *sin is a transgression of the law of God.* No *Christian fortitude* can be shewen either in the encountring of a danger, for *not doing what he ought to do*: Or for the encountring of a danger, rather then doing, what God hath given him a *freedom* and *liberty to do*. As to the first a man is not Gods Martyr but the Devils: As to the Second, he cannot be a Martyr for God but for his own humour, God hath left him a liberty, he need not suffer unless he will. But now there may be several actions as to which a good man doth not see his liberty, but lyeth under apprehensions, that they are unlawful. The Question is *what a Christian is to do as to them?* And *whether a Christian can shew any Christian fortitude in encountring dangers rather then doing them.* To which I shortly answer,

1. *That it is the duty of every good man as to such actions to use all the means he can, as to a true information of his own conscience.* Reading the holy Scriptures, and other good Books, interpreting the Scriptures, which may rightly inform him: Keeping his ear open to all arguments on both sides, to all instructions.

2. *If by no means he can receive Satisfaction as to the lawfulness of such actions, the doing of them would be sin to him, and he is bound to encounter any danger rather then do them and this is a piece of Christian fortitude.* The proximate Rule of our actions must be our own Conscience (by which I mean, our own practical judgment of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of things to be done, according to the best information we have, or can get concerning the will of God in his word;) the persuasions, commands, dictates, or practice of others is no rule to us. We must resist what our own Consciences tell us is sin and contrary to the will of God.

But it must be *lawfully*. It must be such a *resistance* only as Gods

Gods Word doth allow us. A private Person in the resistance of sin, must not *resist the power, which is the Ordinance of God, Rom.* 13. 2. It is one thing to do what such powers command, another thing by Arms to resist. God hath not given the Sword into any private hand, and such a Person drawing it shall perish with it; we must *strive against sin*, but we must *strive lawfully*, not by ill Language, or boisterous actions, but by meek and patient Suffering.

3. Lastly. The End of *Christian fortitude* must be, 1. *The glory of God.* 2. *The Salvation of our own Souls.* 'Tis no Christian valour, to be valiant for any thing but the truth, the honour and glory of God, the cause and concern of God in the World: and in a matter where the Eternal Salvation of his own Soul is concerned. Thus far I have opened to you the nature of this *Christian courage* and *fortitude*, which I am calling to you for. Let me in the next place offer something to you which may promove this excellent habit in your Souls. A *Natural courage* cannot be given, where any thing of a *Moral fortitude* may be promoved by rational arguments, education, and a due digestion of moral Principles. But there must be some good natural foundation of courage, for the *Moralist* in the managery of his disciple to build upon, but it is not so as to this *Christian fortitude*. Persons of the weakest sex, of the lowest, meanest, weakest Spirits by nature, have been made valiant as to the Spiritual fight from the *dread of God*, the *Love of God*, by *faith* in the Word of God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. Now in order to this excellent habit, and so necessary for these times,

1. The first thing which I shall commend unto you in order to it is, a *Sound knowledge of the revealed will of God, both concerning sin, and concerning duty.* Knowledge is the *foundation of faith.* It is that which giveth boldness to a man both in speaking and in acting. A poor ignorant Person may be valiant, but he cannot expect to be so, he is Sometimes made valiant in an extraordinary manner, by some special instinct, and impression of God upon him, as that Woman which told her Judges, *She could not dispute, but she could dye for Christ.* A just knowledge of what I may, or may not do, of the Nature of God, his promises, and threatnings, is most necessary to a true Christian courage and fortitude. He fighteth more like a *madman*, then a *Christian*, that is not first fully Satisfyed in the goodness, and justice of his cause.

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2. A knowing man may be *cowardly if he be not rooted and grounded in the faith, heartily and firmly believing what he hath the notion of. Faith* is the only *shield that keepeth off the fiery darts of the wicked.* Now this is the gift of God, and the way to obtain it is *Prayer.* Beg of God his Spiritual armour, and to make you valiant in the Spiritual fight, Math. 26. 41. *Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.*

3. *Set as loose to the World and all your concerns, and Relations in it as you can.* It is observed of great Cities that they seldom hold out long against an Enemy, Their *Riches*, their *Wives and Children* make them Cowards. That Man or Woman that hath not learned to deny himself in all his worldly contentments can never be valiant.

4. Lastly *look unto Jesus the Author, and the finisher of your faith, who for the joy that was set before him, indured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down on the throne of God; consider him who indured such contradiction of sinners in himself, lest you be wearied, and faint in your minds.* It is the Apostles advice, *Heb.* 12. 3. The valour and courage of a General oft times puts mettal, and courage into his Souldiers, & retrieveth a day of battel when it is upon the point lost. The eying of Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith, is of mighty use to us to ingage us to go on to the Spiritual fight without fear or dread. Let me press this upon you by a few arguments.

1. The first shall be from *the too general decay of this gracious habit in the Spirits of Christians.* God of old complained by his Prophet, *Jer.* 9. 3. That there was a *generation of them who bent their tongues like bows for lies*, but there were *none valiant for the truth upon the Earth.* How few are there this day that are valiant for the truth? There are many that bend their bows for lies. *Papists* are full of courage and mettal for an idolatrous worship; wicked men are full of malice & courage to accuse, inform against, and to destroy the People of God, but who is on the Lords side? Who? Where is the courage of Christians for the truths, the waies, the Ordinances of God? They dare not appear for God, but seek all waies to hide, and cover themselves, and to withdraw themselves from the Lords battels. They are not like the warlike horse God speaketh of to *Job*, that *saith amongst the Trumpets, Ha, Ha*, that mocketh at fear, is not affrighted, and turneth not his back from the Sword. It is time for some to

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shew themselves *valiant for God*, for the truths, and Ordinances of God. We are afraid that true Religion is almost at its last Gaspe in our times. *Where is the Spirit, of the Lord God of Elijah?* The Spirit of those Antient Worthies that noble Army of *Martyrs*, that loved not their lives unto Death, but witnessed a good confession, they transmitted the true Religion to us sealed with their blood, the Spirits of Christians do not appear as if we were like to add many such seals to it, and pass it also under our Seal to the generation which is like to succeed us. Let this a little move us.

2. Consider *how necessary a grace it is for the times in which we live.* The whole Life of a Christian upon the Earth is such a warfare, such a warring with Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual wickedness in high places, that he had need be called to, at all times, to put on the *whole Armour of God*, that he may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil, to *withstand*, and *when he hath done all to stand.* But the times wherein we live seem to have a particular malignity against Religion and Godliness above the times we have seen, or the daies of our Forefathers. The Devil is come down with a *great rage*, we had need of *courage*, and of *patience.* The *Casuists* trouble their Readers with many Questions in order to the Solution of this one Question, *When a Christian is obliged to make an explicit Confession of his Faith*, and to declare what he is, and what he will stand to, and abide by? They agree generally, that he is bound to do it *where the glory of God is eminently concerned.* 2. Or *where the good of others is in eminent hazard.* There are certainly two times when the *glory of God is eminently concerned* in Christians appearing for him. 1. *When his Truths and Ordinances are like to be trodden under foot.* 2. *When the Name and Things of God are eminently blasphemed.* I beseech you consider whether these be not times of great reproach and blasphemy; were ever the Truths of God more opposed? was ever the holy Name of God to that degree blasphemed? was there ever a greater rage against Religion and Godliness? Is it not now time for Christians to buckle on their Armour, to quit themselves like men, to arm themselves with courage, to shew themselves like a company of Horses in *Pharaoh's Chariots*, Horses that will not be afraid, like *Grashoppers*, Horses that *paw in the Valley*, and rejoyce in their strength, and *go on to meet the armed men.*

3. Consider, That *Christ hath made you like the Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots.* I will open this in two things.

1. *He hath put of his strength into you.* The wise man saith, *The Horse is prepared for the day of Battel*; he is prepared by Nature, by a great natural Spirit which God hath given him, and he is prepared by Art and Managery. God hath prepared every Christian for this Spiritual battel by giving him a *New Nature.* We use to say, That if the Horse knew its own strength, it would be too hard for the Rider. God in mercy to man hath hidden the Horses strength from him. God in judgment hath hidden Christians strength from them, in these sinful times. The Church hath a strength in it, such a strength, as the Gates of Hell cannot prevail against. Believers have a strength in, and with them, if they would but put it forth; prisons, torments, fires, in former times could not prevail against them. How hath God in these sinful times hidden the wisdom of the wise, and the prudence of the prudent, and the strength of the strong men from them? What a strength was there in *Luther* when *Melanchon* was afraid they should perish in their appearing for the Cause of God, and he made answer, *Esto, ruamus, ruet Christus una, Christus magnus ille regnator mundi; mallem cum Christo ruere, quam cum Cæsare stare.* Be it so (saith he) Let us perish, Christ must perish with us, Christ, that great *Ruler* of the World; I had rather fall with Christ, than stand with *Cæsar.* The Horse is not afraid of an *Army* of armed men; he *goeth on to meet the armed men, he mocketh at fear, he is not affrighted, he turneth not his back from the Sword, he feareth not the rattling of the Quiver,* nor the *glittering of the Spear, and the Shield, he swalloweth up the ground with fierceness and rage,* neither believeth he *that it is the sound of the Trumpet.* Christ hath made his People like to these Horses, only the strength of the Horse is natural, the Believers strength is spiritual. Why are we afraid? 2. *The Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots had doubtless some Armour to protect them and preserve them.* However, he that governed the Chariot took a care of them. Thus also were the Horses prepared for the Battel, by Art, as well as by Nature. Thus are Christians also prepared; there is an *Armour of God* prepared for them, which they are to put on. And Christ who governeth his own Chariot, his Church, will take care of them, *Psal.* 46. 5. God is in the midst of the Church, therefore it shall not fall, *Isa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day, Psal.* 125. 2. As the Mountains are round about *Hierusalem,* so the Lord is round about his People; *He will create a defence upon their glory, a cloud, and a smoak,*

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and a flaming fire upon her Assemblies, a Tabernacle, a place of Refuge, a covert from the storm, and from Rain, Isa. 4. 4, 5.

4. And lastly; *Christ expecteth this from you.* Thus much methinks is signified to us by the phrase, *I have compared thee to a company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots.* The Prince expects that his *War-horses* should serve him in the day of Battel, that they should not be afraid of armed men, of Drums or Trumpets, &c. It is the service we have to do for Christ in the use of the habits of his grace bestowed upon us, and in thankfulness for all the goodness he hath shewed us in more calm and quiet times. That Christian ill requiteth the Lord for all his feeding in green and fat Pastures, who when an Evil day comes, and the Lord by his Providence calleth out to the World, *Who is on my side?* Who is afraid, or ashamed to appear for God, own his Truths, and sacred Institutions? Christ hath not compared us to *Asses*, that couch under burdens, but to a more generous sort of creatures, to Horses, to Horses in *Pharaoh's Chariots.* Look upon your selves as such. Be not like the cowardly Cur, that runs away as soon as a Man takes but up a stone to throw at him. We read of Christians in the Primitive times, that they would expose themselves to their Tormentors, telling them, *They were Christians.* In Queen *Mary's* time the Persecutors cursed the People of God, and said, *They had a mind to burn.* Oh that Christians in these times had such a courage, as the *wicked Apostates*, and their most furious Adversaries, might think that Christians in the defence of the Gospel, had a mind to suffer whatever their wicked hands durst do against them. Certainly he who hath given Christians the grace of fortitude and courage, expecteth the exercise of it.

2. But secondly; This Doctrine *calleth aloud to Christians for Unity.* Christ hath not compared us to Horses in a Field, but in a Chariot, where they are united. Horses in Chariots draw by couples, and that maketh their draught the more easie. Oh that my head were a fountain of waters, my eyes rivers of tears, that I might weep day and night for the Divisions amongst the People of God. This hath made almost every Horse draw singly, and hath almost mired the Lord's Chariots.

1. I beseech you consider how God's Enemies are united. *Gebal*, *Ammon*, and *Amalek*; *Papists* and *Atheists* are united in their opposition to Truth and Holiness, against every person, and every thing which hath any thing of the stamp and impression of God

upon it. Is it not time for all *Protestants* to unite, all such especially as are Christians not in name only, but in deed, and in truth? It may be we cannot unite in every Principle or *Ecclesiastical Practice*; we have different apprehensions, and we cannot reconcile them: Can we not *forbear one another in love*? who hath made us more infallible than our Brethren? 2. I beseech you consider, *what already have been the fruits of our breaches, and disunion, and what is likely to be the further issue of them, if not in time prevented.* Popery is increased; many absurd and blasphemous Opinions are propagated; what will the end of these things be? Shall we not be made a common prey, *pugnant singuli, vincuntur universi*; while men fight singly, they are overcome universally. You that have any savour of the things of God upon your Souls, that have sense of things, and how dismal the state of them is, and is like to be, I beseech you lay these things to heart. The whole Ministry of the Gospel, the Ordinances of God are struck at. One Truth of God is cryed down after another. Lay these things to heart, and while you are perswaded that your Brethren own the same *common Faith* with you, and pursue the same common design of the glory of God, and Holiness as the means to it, give an allowance to them in some things wherein you differ; do not arrogate Infallibility to your selves; believe it is possible you also may be mistaken; and though you are bound to live by your own Faith, and walk according to your own Faith, and Perswasion, yet do not pronounce an *Anathema* against all that are not just of your size. Lay aside your heats and animosities, and your differences, which are of far less moment than the whole Interest of Christ and his Gospel is. I shall conclude my Discourse, as the Apostle begins his second Chapter to the *Philippians*; *If therefore there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels of mercy*: Let me add, If any concern for the honour and glory of God, or the Interest of Christ or Religion in the Nation, fulfil the compatison of my Text, and be you yet at last *like a company of Horses in* Pharaoh's *Chariots, being like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind, and do the same thing in bearing a joint Testimony for God.*

Sermon XLIX.

Cant. 1. 10.

Thy Cheeks are comely with rows of Jewels: Thy neck with Chains of gold.

THE Blessed Lover in this song goes on yet in the commendation of his Spouse. He had before commended her from her more *inward beauty*, he had called her, *The fairest amongst women*, he had compared her to *a Company of Horses in* Pharaohs *Chariots*, those Phrases had respect to her *inward endowments*. He knoweth not how to leave, he here goes on in her further commendation, *thy Cheeks are comely with rows of Jewels, thy Neck with Chains of gold.* These Phrases speak *Riches*, for *Jewels* and *Gold* are things of *value*, and *her beauty*, her *artificial beauty*. For these are *Ornaments* supposed to add to the beauty and comelineſs of the Person that wears them. Only there is something looks a little odd according to the guiſe of our Country, where Women use to wear *ropes of Pearl* about *their Necks* or *Wriſts*, or *Jewels* on their *Breasts* or in their *Ears*, but how these should reflect a beauty on her Cheeks is hard to understand, but we understand not the *fashions of other Countries*. We read, *Isa.* 3. 21. Of *Nose Jewels* in use amongst the Jews, which *dressers* of Women in our times would find hard to put on. And if a way could be found for that, we should judge them very strange *Ornaments*. But let me first open the words. Our translators add some Words here to compleat the sense. In the *Hebrew* is no more then, *Thy Cheeks are comely with rows* — and *thy Necks with Chains*. Our *Interpreters* not being able to conceive, what rows (except of Jewels) could adorn the face, have added these Words to the former part: Not able to conceive what *Chains* should adorn the Neck of a woman except *of Gold or Pearls*. And having added *Jewels* to the former words, they add here not of Pearls, nor *Jewels*, but *of Gold*. Neither are other

Interpreters agreed about the translation of the other Words, either as to the matter or form. As to the form the *Septuagint* reads the Word as a *question*. *How comely are thy Cheeks?* But most other Interpreters read them positively, and indicatively, as we read them; that difference is not much. But there is yet a greater difference as to the matter of the words, for the Seventy read it, How fair are thy Cheeks, ὡς τρυγόνος, *as of a Turtle*. The *Arabick* and *Vulgar Latin* follow them. The *Syriack* Interpreters translate it, *thy Cheeks are fair in thy locks*. *Pagnin*, *Montanus*, and most others read it according to the sense our translation puts upon it. Let me at least attempt to reconcile this difference. The Word is בתור ם which unquestionably derives from the *radical Word* תור which in its *Original* and *primary signification*, signifieth to *make a diligent search and inquiry*. Thence the Noun תור which signifieth *a search*; or the *order of a search*. We translate it *estate*, 1. *Chron.* 17. 16. *David* saith, thou hast regarded me according to the *estate* of a man of high degree: That is, according to the *rank* or *order* of one that is of an high degree. It is used to express the *order* in which the Maidens came in to King *Ahasuerus*, *Esther* 2. 12, 15. *Pagnin* translateth the *Noun* תור (which is used both here, and in the next verse) *series*, *ordo*, *ratio*, *dispositio*, *forma*, and saith this signification ariseth out of the other; and that it signifieth such a *search* or *inquiry*, as is in, and according to order: The Word also signifieth a *Turtle*. So it is used, *Levit.* 12. 6. *Gen.* 15. 9. *Cant.* 2. 12, *Psal.* 74. 19. *Levit.* 14. 22. *Levit.* 1. 14. But it is hard to put that sense of it upon this Text, though the *Septuagint*, and those that follow them, do it. For what sense can we make of this? *Thy Cheeks are* comely with *Turtles*. But some of the Hebrew Doctors tell us, that the word signifieth also a *kind* of *Womens Ornaments*, and *Pagnin* tells us that *R. David* saith it signifieth *Pearls* or *Jewels*, set in *order*; some think it was an *Ornament* that had something of the figure of the *Turtle*. They say the *Turtle* hath this name from the mournful noise which it maketh, sounding in our Ears like this Word. Others think the *French word Tour* (which we have now made *English*) signifying an Ornament of the head, and the English word *Attire* both derive from this *Hebrew* word. From this discourse you may gather, that the penury of words in the Hebrew tongue, constraining them to signify several things by the same word, is the reason of the

difference of *Interpreters* in the translation of the *Hebrew Text* both in this, and many other Texts. It is most probable, that Women had some *Ornaments* in those Countries, which they expressed by this name, and that, τερύγιον in the Greek also did express it (though our *Lexicographers* give us no such account of τερύγιον.) The learned *Mercer* observes that those Interpreters who translate the words, *as the Turtle*, are mistaken both in the affix which is not כ but ב, and in the number, which is *Plural*. It must be *thy Cheeks are comely in the Turtles*, which it would be hard to make sense of, if we should interpret the word of the *Turtle doves*: I conclude therefore, that it is a very difficult Text to give a certain Interpretation of, and that the sense our Interpreters have put upon it bids as fair as any other, and therefore I shall adhere to that. The word certainly signifieth some *Ornaments* in those times used by Women to adorn their heads with, called by this name because of the order and exceeding neatness of them, or because of their figure, and fashion. Our Interpreters have thought fit, to Interpret the word concerning those Ornaments, though we do not exactly know their fashion. So then the sense must be, *Thy Cheeks are comely or beautiful, in or between the Ornaments of thy head*. It followeth, Thy Neck *with Chains* of Gold or Pearls. Two or three things I shall observe to you.

1. Some Interpreters make a question whether in this expression our Saviour hath not a respect to the former comparison; he had there compared to his Spouse to a *company of Horses in Pharaohs Chariots*; it is you see a fashion with us to deck up Horses which we value with Ribbands *&c.* It might be a custom in those richer places of the World to deck them with Jewels, and Chains of Gold. *Mercer* and other learned Interpreters think it more probable, that he passed on to a new similitude, comparing his *Church*, or the particular *believing* Soul to a *Beautiful Woman* in her Ornaments. Qu. 1.

2. This blessed Lover had before commended her for her *internal worth*, and *beauty*: For *strength* and *courage* she was like to the Horses in *Pharaohs Chariots*. Here he commendeth her from her *external Beauty*: Her *Cheeks were comely* with *Rows of Jewels*, her *Neck* with *Chains* of *Gold*, or *Pearls*.

Let me now pass from the *explication of terms*, to the understanding of things. I shall only turn the words of the Text into a *Proposition*.

Prop.

Prop. *The Spouse of Christ, hath her Cheeks comely with Ornaments and her Neck adorned with Chains.*

The *Proposition* will call to us principally for *Explication* and *Application.*

In the *Explication* we will inquire,

1. *What is here to be understood by the Spouses Neck, and Cheeks.*

2. *What are those Rows, and Chains with which the Sponse of Christ is, and must be adorned.*

As to the first of these I shall not trouble you with the several fancies of Interpreters of Luxuriant fancies but only insist upon what I conceive most proper, and shew you the grounds of it.

1. They are both *exteriour parts, and ordinarily exposed to the view of others.* Other parts are covered, and not so exposed. *Mercer* noteth, that amongst Women, if these parts have their just proportion, and beauty, concerning others, there useth to be no inquiry, their *Symmetry* and *comelines* is judged from these. So as doubtless these terms note the Spouses *conversation before the World* in her outward visible appearance; The Spouse of Christ is (as the Psalmist expresseth it) *all glorious within*; Her chief *Ornament* is what the Apostle *Peter* adviseth Women professing Godliness, the *hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 4. But that is not all her Beauty, her *light also shineth before men, that they see her good works, and glorify her Father which is in Heaven, Mat.* 5. The Cheeks are the path upon which the penitential tears run, *her tears are on her Cheeks, Lam.* 1, 2. Her *tears of affliction* also run down there. Her Cheeks are those parts which are exposed to the *violence* and *injuries* of others, *Isaiah* 50. 6. *I gave my Cheeks to them that plucked off the hair*, Lam. 3. 30. *He giveth his Cheek to him that smiteth him. Micaiah* you know was *smote on the Cheek* by the *false Prophet.* These Cheeks of the Spouse, exposed to the smiters, bedewed with tears, either because of sin, or sharp sufferings, are in *Christ's Eyes very lovely.* Thus the words afford us two notions. 1. *That the Sponse of Christ* is very *beautiful not only within but in her more external conversation.* 2. That even the *suffering parts of the Spouse are in the Eyes of Christ very beautiful.* It is reported of *Constantine* the great that he would often kiss the hole of *Paphnutius* his Eye, that was

put

out for the profession of the Gospel. Christ commendeth the Cheeks of his Saints bedewed with tears, and given to the smiters for his sake, *how beautiful saith he are thy Cheeks?*

2. Secondly the *Neck* is that part of a man upon which men use (as to beasts) to put *ropes* and *yokes* to bring them into Subjection, as also upon which men of labour, Porters and such like, use to carry burdens. Hence we often in holy Scripture read of a *stiff neck*, to express *stubbornness* and *disobedience*, Isaiah 48. 4. *Thy neck was as an Iron sinew*, Jer. 17. 23. *They made their neck stiff*, that they might not hear; and the disobedient *Israelites* are often called a *stiff necked People*, Exod. 32. 9. 33. 3, 5. And so in many other places of Scripture. The *Freedom, and pliableness* of the Neck are also often made use of, to signify the *Freedom* and *obedience of the Person*. So *Gen.* 27. 40. *Thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck*. So *Isa.* 10. 27. *His yoke shall be taken from off thy neck*, that is, thou shalt be at liberty from him. The *neck* is that part of man which the Holy Ghost maketh use of in Scripture to express *disobedience by*, the *stiff necked* man, is the man that is stubborn, & disobedient to the Law of God, the man that *hardened not his Neck*, is the Obedient man: Christ hath Chains for the necks of his People; wicked men put yokes upon their necks, their *yokes* are yokes of Iron. God promiseth to break these *yokes*, but yet they are not without a *yoke*, Christ hath a yoke, *Matth.* 11. 29. *Take my yoke upon you. for my yoke is easy*, and *my burden is light*. Christ hath Chains, but they are of Gold, the Enemies Chains are of Iron, they are hard, and grate, but (saith Christ) my yoke is easy. By the Spouses *neck*, our Saviour doubtless means his Spouses Obedience, whether in doing or in suffering.

The next Question is what is here to be understood by the *Rows* of *Jewels*, and the *Chains* that are here mentioned; I noted to you before that the Word here used signifieth an orderly disposal of things, and from that word the word, תורה (which signifieth the Law of God) cometh; in the Law of God the duties of men and women are orderly disposed. To say nothing of the various fancies of Interpreters, I take the most genuine probable sense to be this, *thy external conversation* is *beautiful* and *comely*, *by thy orderly walking according to the rule of my Law*. Holiness which lyeth in the ordering, and government of a Christian steps, according to a divine order and rule, is exceeding Qu. 2.

ing beautiful, comely in the *Eyes of Jesus Christ*. To this sense the *Chaldee Paraphrast* an ancient Interpreter (but applying the whole song to the Jewish Church) carries it, for he thus Paraphraseth upon my Text:

"How comely is this People, which hath the Words of the "Law given to them? That they may be as an ear-ring on their "Cheeks, that they may not depart from the right way, as the "Horse that hath a bridle in his mouth is kept that he doth not "go back. And how beautiful are their necks [or backs] "which bear the yoke of my commandments, which are up- "on them as a yoke upon the neck of the Ox which ploweth in "the field?

He (as you see) applyeth all to the Jews (and therein he is very fond, and partial) but you see by the *rows* and *Chains* he understandeth the *Laws and Precepts of God*, according to which every good man ordereth his conversation aright. *Chains* for the most part both for the *hands*, and *necks* and *feet*, use to be made of brass or Iron, or some baser metal; with these *Prisoners* in war, or Malefactors in peace use to be bound, and hence the term is made use of to signify the greatest and baseſt *subjection* and *servitude*. *Chains* are also made of *Pearls* and *gold*, or some valuable *metal*, *Pro.* 1. 9. And these *Chains* denote *greatest liberty*, being used and worn by none but by Persons of Quality. The Text is to be understood of the latter, and the most valuable Interpreters interpret the Chains here concerning the yoke of Gods Commandments. *Solomon* counselleth the young man, *Pro.* 1. 8. to hear the *instruction* of his Father, and not to forsake the *law of his Mother*, for saith he *v.* 9. *They shall be an Ornament of grace to thy head*; And *Chains about thy neck*. Certainly the instructions; and the Laws of God are much more so. *Holiness* is a great *Ornament* and beauty to a Soul; take *Chains* in which sense you will, either for *Chains* of *Iron*, with which Enemies load the necks of Saints (for I told you those Words [of Gold] are added by our Interpreters;) or for those *Chains*, which are *of gold*, and Pearl, and the richest Ornaments, either of them are lovely in the Eyes of Christ; but I rather concur with our own Translators, and the most Interpreters, who expound the term of the latter sort of *Chains*, not only because our Saviour seemeth here to allude to the *Ornaments of women*, but because the *Heb.* Word here used,

[רתים]

him is never used to expresse Chains of Bondage in all those Texts of Scripture where any mention is made of such Chains. And *Pagnin* assureth us from three of the *Hebrew Rabbins* that the word properly signifies *Chains made of Gold*, or precious Stones joined with a thread together.

By this time you may easily understand the *Proposition*, the sense of which according to this explication is,

The Spouse of Christ, whether by her we understand the Church which is a body made up of several believers, or a particular believer, is not only inwardly comely, and beautiful, in respect of those habits of grace, by which she is made (as the Psalmist expresseth it) *all glorious within*, but she is also visibly comely, in her more external appearance, by her orderly conversation, according to the Laws of God, which is as an Ornament or Chain of well set Jewels unto her, and by her ready submitting her Neck to the yoke of Christs Commandments, his several Precepts being like a Chain *of Gold* or *precious stones* about her neck. This is enough for the explication, the Child of God is not only inwardly, but outwardly holy, and his holiness is a great beauty to him. Here are two things.

1. *The Child of God, is not only inwardly, but externally holy.*
2. This *external holiness is to him a great beauty.*

A Child of God hath a *good heart*, but that's not all, he must live a good life: this is a point exceeding obvious whether we consider, 1. The *Rule by which he walketh.* Or Secondly, The *influence that the heart hath upon the life.* Or 3. *The example he is to follow.* Or 4. The *Patterns of holy men upon Scripture record.* 5. Or the *promises of God* to whom they are made, Or 6. The descriptions of good men in holy writ. Or 7. *The end which he serveth.*

1. If we consider the *Divine rule*, it reacheth not the heart alone, but the outward man. *Let your light so shine* before men (saith our Saviour) that *they may see your good works. Shew me thy faith by thy works*, saith *James*, *faith without works is dead.* It were endless to reckon up the several Texts of Scripture by which God hath directed the Government of our *Tongue*, our *Eyes*, our *Ears*, our *Hands*, our *Feet*: in short the several Precepts for good works are all proofs of this.

2. It must be so if we consider *what influence the heart and will, & affections have upon our whole outward man*, commanding all the

outward members, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, from the dictates of the heart the Eye looketh, the hand moveth, the mouth speaketh, the Feet turn this or that way; So that if the Tree be good, the fruit must be good also; the Fig-tree brings not forth thistles, nor the Vine thorns. A naughty tongue, eye, hand, foot, is a certain indication of a corrupt, and naughty heart.

3. The *believer is made conformable to Christ.* He went up and down *doing good*, finishing the work, which his Father had given him to do, glorifying his Father on Earth, doing his will, manifesting his name; *no guile was found in his mouth*, no *iniquity in his hand*. No iniquity towards God, no unrighteousness towards men.

4. See this *Pattern* of holiness upon *Scriptural record*, *Abraham*, and *David*, all the holy Servants of God, you will find their holiness did not lye only in the obedience of their heart, but of their whole external converse, a strict walking with God in obedience to his *will*.

5. Observe the *promises of God*, they are not onely made to *Faith*, and *Love*, and the more inward habits of the mind, but to *external acts*, such as *Prayer*, *hearing the Word*, *Sanctification of the Sabbath*, shewing mercy to the poor, doing justly, walking righteously, &c.

6. The *descriptions of holiness also make out this*. They are described to be men *fearing God* and *ashewing forth* walking in the Commandments of God. Working righteousness, all which expressions signify that a believer must not only be internally holy, but externally to also.

Lastly the *end*, which they serve shews also a necessity of it; they are *lights* to inlighten the World, and therefore they must not be hid under bushels: They are *Salt* to season the World, and therefore must be exposed to their use, their end is to glorify God before men, which cannot be without an external, as well as an internal holiness; thus the first thing appeareth. I have passed over these things easy enough to have been extended into a much larger discourse, Because it is a point so exceeding obvious and indeed agreed by all men. The 2d thing is, that *holiness is a believers beauty*, it is so in the eyes of Christ which is here spoken of. Nor is this of any thing more difficult demonstration then the other. What is that which we call beauty but an amiable external appearance of a Person, arising from a *Symmetry of parts*, a due

mixture

mixture, and Proportion of colours, in conformity to some *Original Pattern* or *Idea*. A Christians *Original Pattern* is God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, *be you holy as your Heavenly Father is holy*; *As I am holy*, (saith the holy Writ.) What can be a Christians beauty but his conformity to God, and that amiableness which ariseth from that. All Spiritual beauty is to be measured, from the *symmetry* of the Soul to the divine law. That which makes the Soul amiable to God and to all those who are like God. This is *holiness*. But I shall sum up all in some few Words of application. I shall first observe from hence two or three *Corollaries* for our instruction, then close all with a few words of exhortation.

Observe then, *That it is not enough for one that owneth the name of a believer, to glory in a good inside.* There goeth a good outside, as well as a good inside to make up a *good Christian*. There are 2 Sorts of *hypocrites*, and I am at loss with my self to determine which is worst. *The first sort glory in appearance but not in reality.* The *Pharisees* were of this Sort, they were *painted Sepulchers*, they made clean the outside of the platter; of this Sort are men that pretend much to acts of devotion, *praying*, *fasting*, *hearing*, and acts of *righteousness* toward men, and perhaps *charity*, but are without any true faith in God, or love to God, full of malice, and envy, and cruelty, and *covetousness*, these are *Pharisaical Hypocrites*. The 2d are such as will *pretend to a good inside*, but they have a *bad outside*. These men bite, and devour their brethren lye and cheat, and defraud, and oppress, neglect duties of Religion, &c. And yet tell you *they have a good heart*, they have faith in God, Love to God, &c. Thou Hypocrite! shew me thy faith by thy works, thy pretended *Love to God* by thy keeping his commandments. Truly of the two, these are the worst, they pretend to *holiness*, but which way will you look for it? What notion of holiness have these men taken up? Will you look for it in their conscientious, constant attendance upon duties of *publick Worship*, there you see their places empty, or if they be filled, observe their behaviour, they are prating, or sleeping, or sporting, or with their Eyes compassing the whole congregation. Will you look for it in their private families? There it may be you may hear the voice of Cursing, or Swearing, or reviling, but the voice of *Praying*, or *reading the Word* of those that sing, pride

Corol. 1.

unto God, is seldom or never heard in their House. Will you look for their holiness, in their behaviour toward men, you shall there find neither *Justice nor Charity*, cheating, defrauding, Oppression, cruelty, hard-hearted behaviour, &c. Yet they will tell you they have good hearts. Either now these men have Souls not like other mens Souls, that have no command of their tongues, and hands, &c. Or else they speak falsely. I say these are of all others the Vilest Hypocrites. 1. *Because they have nothing good*, the first mentioned do some good things, materially good, they read, fast, pray, walk justly, give alms: But these wretches have nothing, do nothing at all that is good. There is nothing good in their lives, and that assureth us, there's nothing good in their hearts. 2. *These men do much more hurt then others do*; these are they that cause the name of God to be Blasphemed and evil spoken of. Brethren! be not deceived, they are silly men that you can impose upon, but you cannot impose upon that God who *searcheth the heart, & tryeth the reins*. Let none be deceived by the pretences of these Hypocrites. The Spouse of Christ hath *beautiful Cheeks*, and a *beautiful Neck*, as well as a beautiful inside; her Cheeks are comely be-twixt *rows of Jewels*; She hath a *Chain of gold upon her Neck*. The laws and instructions of her Heavenly Father, are an *Ornament to her head*, and a *Chain upon her Neck*. She durst not before men dishonour God. Let this be the first instructive *Corollary* from this discourse.

Corol. 2. Secondly observe: *The Laws of Christ, are but rows of Jewels, and also Chains.*

1. They are *Chains of Restraint*; As Chains about creatures necks restrain their natural Liberty, and keep them in due obedience and subjection to their Governours: So doth the Law of the Lord. Man is like an untamed Heifer, which would run wildly this and that way; Christ therefore puts a Chain upon him, when he intendeth any Soul for his use. *I will* (saith God) *write my Laws in their inward parts.* (There now is the Chain about the Spouse's Neck.) *Joseph* had this *Chain* about his neck: *How shall I do this evil* (saith he) *and sin against God? By this and live* (saith he) for *I fear God*, and so durst not take any revenge upon you. The Children of God have in them *lust* and *corruption*, but it is chained. The Law of God written in their hearts, is a Chain upon their lusts, and this may mind us to take heed how we abuse that sweet Notion of

Christian

Christian Liberty. Christians are free, but they must take heed that they use not their Liberty for a Cloak to maliciousness, 1 *Pet.* 2. 16. that being the *Lord's Free-men*, they do not make themselves *Servants of corruption.* It is not a Liberty to the Devil's Chains, but from them; not a Liberty to the Flesh, but to *serve the Lord without fear.* 2. As the *Precepts of the Lord are Chains of Restraint*, so they are also Chains Indicative of the greatest liberty and honour; they are Chains, but they are *Chains of Gold*, Chains of Pearl; such Chains speak both the liberty and dignity of those that wear them. *The Law is spiritual, and just, and good* (saith *Paul.*) But further yet, the Precepts of God are also *Rows* of Jewels. It speaks two things;

1. *Rows of Jewels are things as to which a great Art is seen in the orderly disposing of them.* There is a strange *orderliness* to be observed in the Divine Precepts. Could you imagine a Family, a Church, a Common-wealth, any Society of men, in which the several persons, both in their single, and relative capacities, lived up to the strictness of the Divine Rule, respecting them, how orderly would they appear even in the Eye of humane Reason? All the uglines and disorder that we see in mens Lives, in Families, Churches, Cities, Kingdoms (if you observe it) ariseth from mens deviations from the Divine Rule, through the impetuousness of unmortified passions. Hence sinful walking is by the Apostle called properly *disorderly walking*, 2 *Thes.* 3. 6, 7, 11. And the holy man is called one who ordereth his conversation aright, in the last verse of the 50th *Psalm.*

2. *Rows of Jewels are Ornaments.* There is something of *beauty* and comelines resulteth from them, and it resulteth much from the *orderly setting and wearing of them.* There is a great comelines in Holiness. But of this more in the third *Corollary.*

Observe thirdly; *That Holiness is the only Ornament of a man or woman in the Eyes of Christ.* The World is at this day full of gaudry, Rings and Jewels, Bracelets, and Necklaces of Pearl, Patches, and Paintings. *Solomon* hath told us, that *favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: But a woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised. As a Jewel* (saith he) *in a Swines Snout: So is a fair woman without discretion, Prov.* 11. 22. Christ accounts holiness the only beauty of a man, or woman. Our acts of holiness, are in his Eyes the only ropes of Pearl, and Chains of gold, and rows of Jewels. We live in an age of great vanity, as to *Artificial* Corol. 3.

beauty,

beauty, and it would make the heart of a Christian to bleed, to see even to what excesses of this nature, Persons professing to Religion, and Godliness run. Let me therefore close this discourse with a word or two of *Exhortation*. 1. To *neglect other beauty*. 2. *To study this beauty more and more*. 3. *Not to satisfy your selves*, with mere pretenees *of inward purity, whiles your more exterior conversation gives no evidence to it*.

1. I say first to *neglect other beauty*, whether natural (though that be a great gift of God where it is found:) Or *Artificial* which is borrowed from Gold and Silver, and Precious Stones, and Jewels, and fine Cloaths, and Linnen, *&c.*

1. Consider, *This is not your beauty*. That's our beauty which Commends us to our Husband Jesus Christ. He regards not a fine face, nor well proportioned limbs, he regards not Jewels, and Ornaments, nor fine Clothes and Linnen. They are in his Eyes poor vile things. Leave these things to the men and women of the world that have nothing else to Commend them to the wantons of the world. The beauty of a Christian lyeth not in these things, nay they are his shame, and deformity, as I shall by and by shew you.

2. Secondly let me urge the Precept of the Apostle, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9, *Let women* (saith he) *adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefastness and sobriety, not with broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly aray but* (*which becometh women, professing Godliness,*) *with good works*. Mark that phrase (*which becometh women professing Godliness*) as if he should say, these vanities of *broidered Hair*, Gold, Pearl, costly aray, may become men and women of the world, and commend them to the world, but they do not become men and Women professing Godliness, they are not to approve themselves to the vain Persons of the World, but to Christ alone, these things Commend no Soul to Christ, good works, an holy life and conversation according to the rule of the Gospel, that and nothing but that will Commend a Soul to God, that is the only adorning which becometh women that profess to Godliness. You have the like in *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 3. Speaking of good women *whose adorning* (saith he) *let it not be the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing Gold, and putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the Ornament of a meek, and quiet Spirit, which before God is of great price; for*

after

after this manner in the old time *the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves*, I do know the Common Interpretation which some put upon these Texts, as if the Apostle did not wholly forbid these *Ornaments*, but only forbad Christians to look upon these things as their only *Ornaments*, so as to neglect the adorning of the *hidden man of the heart*. Nor indeed do I think these Texts to contain an absolute *prohibition of these things* to all women that are *Christians* and *at all times*. I do know that our Saviour seemeth to allow *soft rayment to those that are in Kings houses*. Reason alloweth an aray to Persons according to the *Station* and *quality* they take up, and are in in the World Religion doth not contradict it. But when I consider, 1. *What* of men, and womens estates, which God hath given them to Cloth *the naked*, to *feed the hungry* &c. (The necessities of their families being first provided for) *is spent on these things*, 2. *The difference between habits for distinction* of *Persons in magistracy* and *habits* for *vanity*, where there is no such distinction. 3. *The time that is spent in* the dressing up worms in this manner. 4. *The proneness of our hearts to value our selves upon these accoutrements*, I cannot but think that there is more forbidden in those Texts, then that Christians should look upon these as their *only* or *Principal Ornaments*. Especially when I also consider that as God in the old Testament forbad his People *the habits of Heathens*; So he hath commanded his People, *Rom.* 12. 2. *Not to be conformed to this World*, *Rom.* 12. 2.

3. Thirdly, *Consider the sinfulness of some of these things*. Where these *adornings* are beyond the *quality of Persons*, and beyond what their estates will bear, in consistency with that Proportion of good works which God requireth of them, where they are *temptations* to draw out the lusts of others: Where they are *offences* and *Scandals* to such as fear God, they are doubtless *sinful*. *Cyprian* in his Book de *Virginum disciplina*, hath several arguments against the new arts of the World for *Ornaments*, especially that of *painting*. God, (saith he) made us after his own Image, it is the Devil who maketh the alteration, O the vile presumption of those, who dare attempt to alter the workmanship of God! Art not thou afraid (saith he) that God in the resurrection should not own thee, and say *opus meum hoc non est*. This is none of my workmanship. Again (saith he) is not this poor wretch alwaies a torment to her self? She

hath

hath her Eyes alwaies in her glass and is never pleased with her self.

Consider lastly, how inconsistent these things are with that *Ministring to the necessity of Saints*: *That riches in good works*, that *mortification*. The *declaration of our sense of Gods dispensations to us*, which are the duties of Christians: God requires that we should *labour with our hands, that we may have to give to him that needeth*, *Eph.* 4. 28. And should not we think you, leave off a *Silk garment*, or a little *Silver* or *Gold lace*, a *Ring*, a *Jewel* a costly *dress* that we might have more abundantly to give to those that need? Are you *rich in the World*, and will your estate bear such expences, and hath not God charged such, 1 *Tim.* 6. 18. To *do good*, to be *rich in good works*, *ready to distribute*, *willing to Communicate*, *laying up in store for your selves a good foundation*, *against the time to come*, *that you may lay hold on Eternal life*. Can you be rich in clothes, and habits, and rich in good works also? If you could doth not the Apostle tell you, *That those who are Christs have crucified the flesh*, *with the affections and lusts thereof*, *Gal.* 5. 24. Is this your crucifixion of the flesh with its affections and lusts? What is a gratifying and pleasing the flesh, what is a making provision for the affections and lusts of it, if this be not? To what other use, or end can these things be? Doth adorning our selves with Jewels and Silks, and Ribbands, patchings and paintings, speak a mortified heart to the World? a Crucified heart to the flesh? They speak nothing less then this; surely they speak flesh, that is wanton, and proud, and puffed up. It is the Observation of a learned Author, That heretofore Christians wounded their flesh for *mortification*, we wound it for *pride*, *folly* and *vanity*; the Ears are boared to hang Jewels in: But how much better is that boaring of the Ear mentioned, *Psal.* 40. 6. *A boaring of the Ears* in Testimony that we will be the Lords Servants for ever. Besides, look throughout all the Scripture you shall find Gods People conformed their habits to *Gods dispensations* towards them. This was done by Gods direction, *Exod.* 33. 5. *I will come up* (saith God) *into the midst of you in a moment and consume you*, *therefore now put off thy Ornaments from thee*, *that I may know what to do unto thee*. They did so v. 6. Accordingly you shall observe Gods People all along in holy Writ, under sad dispensations, putting on *Sackcloth*, throwing ashes on

their

their heads, or their garments. *Behold* (saith God to *Jerusalem*, *Jer.* 45. 4.) *that I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thy self, seek them not.* I beseech you look about, see what God looks at if he were doing with us; doth not he look as if he would come into the midst of us in a moment, and consume us? As if he would strip us all naked, and make us all bare? Is this a time to seek fine and gay things for our selves? How little do we consider what God is about to do in all appearance in the midst of us?

2. Secondly, *Study holiness.* If you will look after *beauty*, study the true, the *inward beauty*, that which commendeth the Soul to God; your labour for the other many times destroys your Souls, it consumes the time which should be spent in reading, in praying, fasting. It devours your estates which should be spent in good works. The beauty vain Persons labour for is but *Jezebels* beauty, study the beauty of *Sarah*, of which you read in, 1 *Pet.* 3. 5. The Ornaments with which holy Women of old, adorned themselves, Ornaments which become such, as do not profess Pride, and vanity, but Godliness. Put Christ Jesus about your Necks, his vows upon your Cheeks. The Pharisees prided themselves in their *Phylacteries*. They did ill to adorn themselves with those Scrowls of the law in their Skirts, while they lived not up to the rule, and true sense of it in their lives, but there are no such vows of Jewels as those of Gods Precepts.

3. Lastly (with which I shall conclude this discourse) *Satisfy not your selves with dreams, and fancies of mere inward, Spiritual beauty.* I again tell you it must be a counterfeit. There may be an external appearing beauty, without any inward beauty, but that is but a counterfeit, there can be no *inward beauty* without an external beauty. *Faith* and *Love* too must be shewed by works, where *holiness to the Lord* is ingraven in any mans or Womans heart, it will also be written (to use the phrase of the Prophet *Zechariah*, *Ch.* 14. 20.) upon the very *bells of the Horses*—*yea every pot in* Hierusalem *shall be holiness to the Lord.* We have a great cry of Religion, and for Religion in these days. We hear abundance talking as if there were no Saints in the World but themselves, but wherein doth their Religion lye? In a fine tongue; they can (as *Luther* said) *Evangelize Christum*, make a crack, and boast of Christ. But where are the *vows of Jewels* upon their Cheeks? The *Chains of Gold* about their Necks? Where

is their strict, and conscientious waiting upon God in Ordinances? Where's the fear of God to be seen in their lives? These times make me often to think of that saying of *Hierom*, *Grande est Christianum esse, non dici.* To be a Christian that is a great, and difficult thing, to be called so, that is a poor and mean, and very easy thing. Look abroad and see how few serious, and uniform Christians are to be found in the World, how few who in any measure answer that great name by any severity of life, and conversation. If *Luxuriousness* in meats, and drinks, if excess in apparel and dresses, if griping the poor, if cruelty towards Persons in distress, and oppression, and covetousness, and adding house to house speak Christians, we have too much of these things even amongst Professors: But if a true believer must shew forth his faith, by works of piety towards God, and works of righteousness, and charity towards men, if they must abound in good works, and their light must shine before men so as they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in Heaven, how small is the number of Christians in this age wherein there is so much talk of it; We must say of many Professors to Religion as once *Isaac said of Jacob*, Gen. 27. 22. *The voice is Jacobs voice*, but the *hands are Esaus hands*. There are many whose voice indeed is *Jacobs voice*, they talk like Saints, O but their hands are *Esau's* hands. Let them come unto you that you may feel them. Their habits are *Esau's* habit; they *eat* and drink like *Esau*, they deal in the World like *Esau*. They are Virgins upward, beasts downward, monsters in Religion. Oh let not this be any of your Character. Know it to be your duty, as much to abound in *Prayer*, *hearing*, *fasting*, *exercises* of *repentance*, and *mortification*, as others make it their vanity to abound in good words, costly apparel, in Pride and Luxury. You must have *Christs rows upon your Cheeks*, his *Chains about your Necks*. I shall conclude with that of the Apostle to the *Philippians*, *Philip.* 4. 8. 9.

Finally (Brethren) whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do. And the God of peace shall be with you.

Sermon

Sermon L.

Canticles 1. 11.

We will make thee Borders of Gold, with Studs of Silver.

THE *Chaldee Paraphraſt* out of his unreaſonable fondneſs to make this whole Song to be nothing elſe but a diſcourſe betwixt God and the *Congregation of Iſrael*, thus gloſſeth upon theſe words.

"*It was then ſaid unto Moſes go up to the firmament, and I will* "*give thee there two Tables of ſtone cut out of the Sapphire of the* "*throne of Glory, ſhining like the beſt Gold ordered with lines writ-* "*ten with my own Fingers, in which are ingraven the Ten command-* "*ments which are more pure, then Silver purified ſeven times, &c.*

I ſhould hardly mention this ancient Jewiſh Paraphraſt ſo often, but to convince the *Atheiſtical* Spirits of latter ages, that the Jews did not underſtand this excellent Song as a meer wanton Love Song, between *Solomon* and the *Daughter of Pharaoh*. Neither did *Gregory Nyſſen*, *Gregory* the great, nor *Bernard*, who with others of the Ancients have wrote Commentaries upon it, ſo underſtand it, though they agreed not with this *Paraphraſt* concerning the Perſons in it. The *Paraphraſt* you ſee makes the law given on mount *Sinai* to be the *Borders of Gold*, and *ſtuds of Silver*.

I am not much ſatisfied with the tranſlation of the words by our interpreters, becauſe I find no other Interpreters agreeing with them. The 70 interpreters who are followed by thoſe who made the *Arabick Verſion* interpret it *images*, or *pictures*. The *Syriack* Interpreters tranſlate it *Chains*. *Arias Montanus*, and the *Vulgar Latine* tranſlate it *Collars*. *Junius* and *Tremellius*, tranſlate it *Golden threds*. *Pagnine* tranſlateth it *Golden Jewels* Beſides, the word here uſed is the ſame with a ſmall alteration of the form which we had in the foregoing Verſe and there we tranſlated it *Rows*, why we ſhould here tranſlate it *Borders* I cannot tell. I think the *Tigurine Verſion* tranſlateth it beſt. They tranſlate it *Ornamenta convenientia*, Convenient Ornaments. It

is certain the word signifieth some such Ornaments as Women used in those times, and Countries. Ornaments differ both in several Countries, and in several Ages in the same Country, so that it is no wonder if Interpreters are at a loss so many hundreds of years since, exactly to translate words signifying things so variable after such a distance of time, and in another country. The more general translation of *Ornaments*, suitable Ornaments, is doubtless the best.

I am as little satisfyed with the translation of the other word [*Peels*] others translate it *Points*, the Septuagint στιγματα marks. It is granted by all that the word is derived from פצל which signifyeth to *peel*. This word is not (that I can find) used any where in holy Writ except in this Text, and *Gen.* 30. & 31. in those chapters it signifyeth the *spots* which were upon the lambs after the sheep had conceived upon the sight of the *pilled* and *streaked* rods, which *Jacob* had laid before them in the *troughs*. The *Dutch translators* interpret the Text, *Buttons* or *knobs* of *Silver*, doubtless the truest translation were with *Badges*, *or spots* of *Silver*. *Mercer* saith, the Phrase doth signify the highest, and most excellent *Ornaments*. But the difference about the words maketh no difference in Interpreters as to the sense, so that it is but a light difference. The sense is *we will give thee yet more, and more excellent Ornaments*. Let me only note to you four or five things which will much conduce to clear up the sense, and lead us to that *Proposition of truth* and point in Divinity which the Text holds forth.

1. I conceive (first) That you will all here understand a *Metaphor* drawn from Women, who delight much in Ornaments of Gold, and Silver, and other precious things. Christ here speaketh to his Spouse as to a delicate Woman which Loves such Ornaments, and promiseth her such. My *Spouse* saith Christ shall have her *Ornaments* too, answerable to, though infinitely excelling Ornaments of Gold and Silver: Most excellent Ornaments, tho Spiritual, and of a far other Nature.

2. He had before said, That her Cheeks were comely between the Rows of Jewels, and her Neck with Chains of Gold she was richly adorned, but (saith Christ) she shall have more also, *Habenti dabitur*. To her that hath shall be given, and she shall have more abundantly. I will not cease to adorn her.

3. Thirdly, He doth not say, Thou shalt buy thee *Borders of*

Gold

which thou hast improve, and with the improvement buy thee more. Grace is not measured. Nor is the first grace given and the further grace of God measured. It is all given. *We will* (saies Christ) *make for thee.* The *posse esse* as well as the *esse*, the abundings as well as the first *breathings*, and motions of *Spiritual life*, are all from God.

4. Lastly, He speaketh in the *Plural Number*: *We will make.* This is either spoken *Stylo Regio*, in the stile of a Prince. Christ is a great King. Or else as it is said, *Gen.* 1. 26. *Let us make man*, to denote the Plurality of Persons in the *Divine Being*, and the concurrence of the whole Trinity, in the collation of *Grace*, and more *Grace* upon believers. It is a rule in *Divinity*: *omnia opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.* All the works of the Trinity, out of itself, and with relation to the creatures, are individed, what is the Act of one Person, is the work of all three Persons. The *Father created*, the Son createth, and the Holy Ghost createth. So in the works of *Providence*. The *Father worketh hitherto, and the Son worketh.* This is eminently true in that noble *work of Providence*. The Collation of special grace, *John.* 14. 23. *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him*, and make *Our* abode *with him.* The Text being thus opened, you see to what point in Divinity it leadeth us. The Doctrine is this:

Prop. *That Christ is ready to give out more grace, more Spiritual Ornaments to the Souls of believers, where he seeth the Cheeks of his Saints already comely with Rows of Jewels, and their Necks with Chains of Gold, he will still be preparing for them Chains of Gold, with Spots of Silver.*

To this purpose is the promise, *Matth.* 13. 12. *To him that hath shall be given*, and *he shall have in more abundance.* It was the end of his coming into the World, not only that his People might have life, but that they might have it more abundantly, *John* 10. 10. And he acteth in the dispensations of his grace according to, and in fulfilling of the end of that his coming. He giveth out pardoning grace abundantly, *Isaiah.* 55. 6, 7. He will *abundantly pardon*, even according to, and much above the abundings of sin in the creature. *Where sin hath abounded*, grace shall *much more abound*, *Rom.* 5. And as sin reneweth so his gracious acts of pardoning are renewed also. *Sanctifying grace*

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(and that indeed is properly the Ornament of a believer) he giveth abundantly. He fills the Souls of his People with joy, and peace in believing, that their Souls may abound in hope, through *the power of the Holy Ghost*, *Rom.* 15, 13. He maketh the Souls of his People to *abound in love*; hence the aboundings in this gracious habit are made the matter of the Apostles prayer, 1 *Thes.* 3. 12. They could not grow in grace if he were not alwaies ready to give out more grace, for all *Acts* must proceed from habits and a growth, and improvement in gracious Acts must flow from an increase of the power, and principle of acting. If any one asks the reason of this *Liberality of Christ to his Spouse it* is not hard to assign it.

1. *That fulness of Grace and Love which is in him* is the great ground and cause of it; what makes the loving Husband who knoweth that his Wife is already full stockt with Cloaths, and Linnen, and Rings and Jewels, and other Ornaments, that yet he can never go abroad but he must bring her home something to add to her stock in these things, but only first *he finds that his purse will hold out to it*; He hath wherewithal to do it. 2. His *Love* and *kindness* to *his Wife is such as constraineth him to it*, so as he can never think she hath enough, and he is still giving to her as if she had nothing. Christ is a fountain of fulness, the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, and of *his fulness* (saith *John*) *we receive grace for grace*; The full fountain runneth over, neither doth he lose any thing by his communication, while he giveth grace, he is but like unto the *Sun* which loseth no light by imparting its light to the World: Then his Love to his Saints is infinite & transcendent, he must not be outvyed by his creatures. Doth therefore a loving Husband when his Wife hath already a competent wardrobe, and a competent number of Ornaments, yet add to her stores, and so much to supply her wants as to shew his own Love and kindness to her? How much more shall the Lord Jesus do it? So that in this reason there are indeed three. The first is that infinite fulness of grace that is in him, which cannot terminate it self in him, without a communication to the creature, the Second is the nature of his communication which is such, that he loseth nothing by it. He saith *we will make thee, borders of Gold*, men and women are not so forward to give what they have *aliunde*, from without themselves: As what they have from themselves and

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are no losers by the communication of. The term *make* doth not denote a *non praexistence*. All the Chains of Gold with which Christ adorneth his Spouse are coævous with Christ himself, given out in the pursuance of an Eternal purpose; purchased with the blood of Christ, but it signifieth that Christ hath them of his own. And then thirdly, *His exceeding Love to his Spouse* causeth the giving of them out. It is said of *Paul*, *Acts* 18. 5. *That he was prest in Spirit, and Testified*, &c. Christ is prest in Spirit, with Love to the believing Soul. His heart is *ravished* as he afterward expresseth it in this song, *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse*. This love is the great and first moving cause of these communications; as the loving husband that hath an estate which will bear it, and a Wife wherein he greatly delighteth, is alwaies giving her such things as he judgeth will be pleasing and acceptable unto her; so our blessed Lord, having first made his grace acceptable to the Soul, and then loving that Soul that hungreth and thirsteth after him, with a transcendent love cannot but be daily Satisfying such a Soul with his good things.

2. A second Reason of this is the *Renewing wants of his Spouse*. Love doth not give bare measure, but sheweth it self further than in a bare supply of wants, Ministring also to the pleasure and delight of the Person beloved, but to *wants* and *desires* it cannot be wanting; the Soul of a Christian, through the revival of lusts, and corruptions within itself, and through the repetition of temptations, and in regard of Gods various dispensations to it, stands in need of the daily increase of grace. No good Soul hath so much grace, but it still wants. A prudent husband though very loving and tender, may judg his Wife hath Ornaments enough, and therefore may cease to add to her stock, though she may not have some particular Ornament, because though she hath it not yet she may not want it, and it would be to her of no profitable use, only it may serve for Pride or ostentation, but no tender husband with-holds from his Wife what he knoweth her to need. But the Child of God never hath so much faith, but he seeth cause to cry out, *Lord help my unbelief*, he is in daily want of Spiritual strength, complaining of weakness, and impotency, so as supplies of grace are a daily good to gracious Souls, and Christ can withhold no such thing from them. *Desire* doth yet more engage the love of a correlate, and the more passionate and vehement the desire of the beloved is, the more he

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that loves moveth towards her Satisfaction. The *Philosopher* saith, to *Love is to will that which is good to another*, though hindered, love rather lyeth in a complacency which one taketh in another, of which the *willing of good* is but a first fruit, and an effect, good he tells us is that which *all desire*. The nature of good lyes in a *Suitableness* and *convenience* to our needs, for the supply of some vacuity, or emptiness in us, all the effluxes and emanations of divine grace are such, suted to some great wants of our Souls, and not only so, but also to the desires of every gracious man and Woman, who is continually crying, *give, give* and God cannot be wanting either to supply the necessities, or to answer the cravings, and importunities of his Peoples Souls. He hears the desire of the humble, *Psal.* 10.17. And *giveth* them their *hearts desire*, *Psal.* 21. 3.

Lastly, *The interest of Gods own honour and glory is concerned in his giving of more grace.* The loving husband buyeth his Wife Chains, and Jewels. And fine Clothes, and when she hath a good stock he is yet adding to the stock; his love to her, his desire to Satisfy her desires so far as he is able in all things convenient, are the great grounds, but yet he hath also some Eye to his own honour and Reputation; by it he is taken notice of in the World as one that is able to do such things, and also as one to whom his Wife is very dear, this blessed Lover first aimeth at his own honour. *Hereby* saith Christ *is your Father glorified if you bring forth fruit*; much fruit of *holiness* requireth much of the seed of God, much grace, as the Principle productive of it, for without his influence the Soul can do nothing. Further grace is necessary to uphold and maintain what grace he hath already bestowed. It is also necessary to the production of that *much fruit* by which God is glorified by his People in the World. *Grace* in its true exercise is a lovely thing in the sight of the World. Men that hate the practice of grace in themselves, yet love it in another. Hence the Apostle, 1 *Pet.* 2.12. commandeth Christians to *have their conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against them as evil doers, they may by their good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of their visitation.* The Children of God are like Stars, which shine from a borrowed light; God hath all the honour of their well doing. The man that walketh piously, devoutly, humbly in his conversation towards God, and in the exercise of justice and righteousness, humility and meekness, mercy and charity, and bounty towards men, that is moderate and sober in the use of prosperity, and patient

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in the time of adversity, doth by this conversation commend himself to all that part of the World, that hath yet any remainder of reason left, whose passions have not out-lawed their reason, and transformed them into Beasts: And look as when the Wife is excellently attired, it draweth the Eyes of all after her, & sets them upon enquiry, whose Wife she is, & the honour redoundeth to the Husband, out of whose Purse her Ornaments are known to come: So when men see Christians abounding in the fear of the Lord, in faith, & love, in meekness, sobriety, liberality to the Poor, love to their Enemies, a doing good to all, the honour doth not only redound to them, but the Name of Christ for their sake is also well spoken of, the grace of God in them is commended and magnified. I come now to the *Application.*

In the first place I cannot but observe from this Text *how Christ condescendeth to our weakness, that he might make himself and his grace desirable to us.* Why doth not our Lord speak plainly, I *will give them more grace,* I will communicate more of my self unto them? He doth so in some other Texts; here he clotheth his discourse with metaphors, and compareth his *grace* to things which we much desire, and which are very lovely, and admirable in our Eyes. This is observable, there is hardly any thing which, while we live in the World, is either necessary for our use, or delightful to our senses, which our fleshly appetite longs for, to which Christ some where or other hath not compared himself and the influences of his grace. Is *Bread* necessary? I am (saith he) the *bread of life, John.* 6. Is *water* necessary? He compares himself, to *living water, John.* 4. Yea to a fountain of living water. Is meat and drink necessary? *My flesh* (saith he) *is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* Is clothing necessary, and *fine* and *rich clothing* desirable? Come (saith he) *buy of me white rayment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear,* Rev. 3. 18. *Is Linnen* necessary? And *fine Linnen* desirable, *Rev.* 21. 8. *To the bride* (the Lambs Wife) *is granted, that she should be arayed in fine Linnen, clean, and white.* Is Physick sometimes wanting to us? *The whole* (saith he, *speaking* of himself) *need not the Physitian but the sick.* Is salve necessary sometimes to us? I counsel thee, (saith he, *Rev.* 3 18.) To *Anoint thee with Eye-salve.* Is *rest and ease* desirable? *Come* (saith he) *to me all you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Is *Gold* and *Silver*, are *rows of Silver*, and *Chains of Gold, borders of Gold,* and *studs or spots of Silver,* desirable? I *Counsel* thee (saith

1 Branch.

(saith he) to *buy of me Gold tryed in the fire, that thou mayest be rich*; and here in my Text, thy Cheeks (saith he) are comely between the *rows of Jewels*: Thy *neck, with Chains of Gold*; we will make for thee, borders of Gold, and *studs of Silver*, Ez. 16. 10, 11, 12. *I clothed thee, with broidered work and shod* thee with *badgers Skins, and I girded thee about with fine Linnen, and covered thee, with Silk; I also decked thee with Ornaments, and I put Bracelets upon thy hands, and Ear-rings in thine Ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head.* What is the meaning of all this, but I bestowed my love, my grace upon thee? How doth our blessed Lord humble himself to make himself, his favour, and grace, the object of the most vain and airy Souls desire?

2 Branch. Observe Secondly *that Christs graces are those Ornaments with which he furnisheth the Souls of his beloved.* They are those borders of Gold, and *studs* of *Silver*, which are here spoken of. They are the true, and the *best Ornaments*. Other *Ornaments* are but the *Devils*, or at best our *own Ornaments*. Such *Ornaments* as are put on for *Pride* or lust are the *Devils Ornaments*. With these Souls are adorned whom he hath by the hand, leading in the broad way which leadeth to destruction. There are indeed other more innocent Ornaments which serve to signify the quality of Persons, and to make them appear more lovely, and amiable, but at the best these are but humane *Ornaments*, they are not the dresses in which Christ dresseth his Spouse, a pious Soul may be dressed in these, (those that dwell in Kings houses, that are of higher quality, and in an higher station, and greater estates in the World, may wear soft rayment;) but these are none of the *Ornaments* which Christ puts upon the Soul that he Loves, though he may allow their infirmity in the use of them. There is other *bread*, and men must use it, but Christ is the *bread of life*. There are other *clothings*, but *Christs righteousness* is the true clothing, and the *white Linnen* of the Saints. There are other *Ornaments* of our bodies, but the *habits of grace*, with which Christ dignifieth and adorneth the Souls of his People, are the only Ornaments of the Souls, which he looks at. Christs *Ornaments* are, *faith, Love, meekness, humility, temperance.* The *Love* and *fear of God, Heavenly mindedness.* Thus saith the Apostle *Peter* of old, the *holy women who trusted in God did adorn themselves.* You have an account of other

other Ornaments, *Isaiah* 3. But you find not this sentence at the foot of that account. *Thus of old holy women who trusted in God adorned themselves.* With some of them you read that *Jezebel* adorned her self when she looked out at the window. Methinks this should be a mighty humbling consideration to a good man or woman who have adorned themselves (after the manner of the World) that they might not be singular, but go like Persons of their rank in the World, to think; Now I have decked, and adorned my self at the expence of a great deal of mony, and I have spent in the doing of it a great deal of time. *None of these things are Christs Ornaments,* he hath allowed me to wear them, but these are none of those things which I have received from him as my Saviour, and Redeemer; none of those things which do commend me unto him, or make me at all more lovely in his sight. These are none of his rows of Jewels, or his Chains of Gold. None of that attire, in which I must, if ever I come to Heaven, be brought unto the King of Kings. This is none of that *rayment of needlework* mentioned, *Psal.* 45. 14. And would serious Christians but entertain some such thoughts, with what a contempt, and neglect would they look upon their other Ornaments, while their circumstances make it but decent for them to wear them. How would they use them only to put them in mind of those *better things* by Christ resembled by them. This comparison also lets us know, that the *Ornaments of grace,* are the best, the most *valuable* most *desirable Ornaments.* Christ compares them to *rows of Jewels,* to *Chains* of *Gold,* to *badges* and *spots* of *Silver;* Jewels Gold and Silver amongst things *Ornamental,* are the bravest, and amongst men counted above others. Ah! that I could this day but fasten this one *nail,* this one persuasion in your Souls, That *habits* of *grace, are the best Ornaments;* how much wast of mony would be saved? How many good works more would be done? How much more given to the necessities of Saints, how much glory would be more given to God? How much more good done to others? How much more peace would be brought to your own Souls? How much more would the poor creature that upon the account of our vanity, is made more a Servant to corruptions, and groans (as the Apostle speaks, *Rom.* 8.) for the day of judgment upon that account, be rescued from that bondage? How much more time would be rescued for

holy duties, were you but rooted, and grounded in this perſuaſion that there are no *Ornaments* like thoſe of the grace of Chriſt. Hear what *Solomon* ſaith, *Prov.* 1. 7, 8, 9. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge.* ---- *My Son hear the inſtruction of thy Father, and forſake not the Law of thy Mother, for they ſhall be an Ornament of grace unto thy head, and a Chain of Gold about thy neck,* Prov. 4. 9. *Wiſdom ſhall give to thy head an Ornament of grace, and a crown of glory.* It were eaſy to demonſtrate theſe to be the beſt and moſt excellent Ornaments, otherwiſe, then by the *Metaphor* of the Text. *Theſe adorn the Soul*: Others adorn the carkaſs only. *The ſubſtance of others* is corruptible, they are things beneath us for the moſt part, in the loweſt ranks of creatures. It is a ſhame to man to be beholden to a ſtone, or a little Earth, or a Silk-worm or a little flax for his Ornament; they are Ornaments that degrade the creature, and make a man beholden for his Honour and Ornament to things he treads upon. *Grace* is a ſupernatural thing, a thing that entreth into the ſubſtance of the Soul, and makes it ſubſtantially beautiful. It is not a *Pendent* that hangs at the *Ear*, or a Necklace that hangs about the Neck, but makes no alteration in it; the Neck, the Ear, is the ſame thing ſtill, with it, and without it, ſtill the ſame grace makes a real, a lovely change in the diſpoſitions, and the affections of the Soul. Other Ornaments commend us but to our earthly Relations, and the vainer part of the World. Grace commends us to Chriſt, to his Father, to Saints and Angels. The demonſtration is eaſie: But ah! how few are they, that believe our Report? How few will believe that Grace is the *Beſt Ornament*?

3. Branch. Thirdly, Obſerve, *The Spouſes Ornaments are of Chriſt, and his Fathers preparing & making.* We will make thee. Neither is the Soul natively adorned, neither is it in its own power by any act of its own will to adorn it ſelf. It's *Righteouſneſs* is as *raggs*, and as a filthy cloth (ſaith the Prophet) raggs and filthy cloths are no Ornaments, neither can theſe Ornaments be purchaſed, *Job* 28. 15. *It cannot be gotten for Gold*, neither ſhall Silver be *weighed for the price thereof*; Nor can theſe Ornaments be borrowed. The wiſe Virgins could lend no Oil to thoſe that were fooliſh, *Matth.* 25. To talk of grace under any other notion, than that of a *free gift*, is indeed no better than *Nonſenſe*. There are *Ornaments* for minds indeed to be got at *Athens*, and other Schools of *Philoſophers*. But theſe are not that *white Linnen*, in which at the great day the Lamb's Wife muſt be

brought to her Husband: Not that *Garment of Needle-work*, in which the King's Daughter must be brought to the King. There's no Faith in Christ, nor pure Love to God and Christ to be got at *Athens*. Flesh and Blood will not convey these things into a Soul.

Lastly; Observe how *the whole Trinity is concerned in the dispensations of grace*. It is the note of the Learned *Mercer*, That the Mystery of the Trinity is here held out to us in the Plural Verb יעשו. I touched upon this before, though indeed the works of the Trinity within it self be divided: The Father begetteth, and is not begotten; The Son is begotten, but doth not beget; The Holy Ghost proceedeth from both, and doth neither beget, nor is begotten; and although to denote the order of working in the holy Trinity, *Creation* is made the work of the Father, *Redemption* the work of the Son, and *Sanctification* the work of the Holy Spirit; yet it is most certain, that all the works of the Trinity, out of it self, are *individed*; what one person doth, all do. All that grace of which the Believer is made partaker, floweth from the whole Trinity; it is from the Father, through the merits of the Son, and by the Holy Ghost. 4 Branch.

In the second place; *Will Christ go on in giving to his Saints more grace? Let not then those of little Faith be discouraged.* Let not those that are strong, despise the weak, nor those who are weak, be discouraged and despond in themselves. If the Child of God hath Faith but as a *grain of Mustard seed*, it shall increase: If it hath but a stock of grace, like the Widdows *Meal* in the *Barrel*, and *Oil* in the *Cruise*, yet the Meal shall not fail from the Barrel, nor the Oil from the Cruise. If the Child of a rich and indulgent Parent be despised by another that hath finer Clothes, and richer Ornaments, than the Wisdom of its Parent thinks fit at present to allow it; it will comfort its self, that its Father is able to do as much for it; that he wants no love to prompt him to it; that it hath a large Inheritance that is made sure unto it. Shall not the Child of God thus comfort himself from its hopes of glory, though it as yet hath but a small earnest of it, from that fulness of grace which is in Christ? *He shall be holden up* (saith the Apostle, speaking of the weak Brethren) *for God is able to make him stand*, *Rom.* 14. 4. And from that readiness that is in Christ, and his Promise to give to him that hath, so that he shall have more abundantly; from the Promise of Christ to the Soul, whose cheeks are already comely with *Rows of Jewels*, and *Chains of Gold*, that he will make for it *Borders of Gold with spots*, Use 2.

spots, or badges, or studs of *Silver*. Let true grace in the Soul be never so faint and weak, it is the Seed of God, it shall abide, yea it shall grow and increase. *Hypocrisie* is alwaies withering; the Hypocrite groweth worse and worse, his fair shews and appearances daily decay, but true grace is alwaies growing; Christ is alwaies adding to it. And indeed this is one thing which distinguisheth a sincerity and truth of grace, from all the counterfeits of it. A Child of God is alwaies growing better and better, the Lord is adding to his spiritual habits. Wicked men, and Hypocrites, are growing worse and worse.

Use 3. In the last place, This Notion calls to all the People of God, 1. *For an admiration of the Love of God towards them*; what a God do we serve! what a Saviour, what a Friend, what a Beloved hath every Soul, whose Soul sincerely loveth the Lord Jesus Christ? The Beloved of your Souls is not like *another's Beloved*, in himself he is not, he is the *chiefest of ten thousand*, he is altogether desires. *He is not to you as another's Beloved*, he is unwearyable in his acts of grace, and dispensations of goodness. Are there any Souls here whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered, whose Souls are regenerated, renewed through the Sanctification of the Spirit, might not these Souls go into their Closets with *David*, and sit down and say, *Who are we, O Lord God!* and what were our Souls, that the Lord should bring us hitherto, that God should wash our Souls white in the Blood of the Lamb, and give us another Spirit than we had by Nature, a new Heart, a new Nature, that he should make us partakers of the Divine Nature? But this was yet a small thing in the sight of God; he hath spoken also of his Servants for a great while yet to come; he hath spoken of more grace, of making for us *Borders of Gold*, with *Badges of Silver*. *A faithful man shall abound with blessings*. The beginnings of saving grace in the Soul, in the *Justification* of the *Soul*, and the first change and renovation of our Natures, are blessings of that nature, as Eternity will be too short a time to admire the Love of God in, and for; but will the Lord also add to his Servants stock, and increase their heap? will he be still making and preparing new Ornaments for them, and giving further grace to them till all their wants shall be supplied, all their emptinesses filled up? what manner of Love is this? Let our Souls be swallowed up in the admiration of this Love; Let our Souls, and all that is within us bless his holy Name.

2. *How doth this Notion call to us for all manner of holiness?* Holi-

ness

ness lyeth in two things, 1. The *mortification* of lusts and sinful habits with the eschewing and declining of sinful acts, which are the fruit of those trees. 2. *The exercises of Godliness.* Let me shortly press both, from this notion of our beloved's being preparing still, and making for us, *Chains of Gold*, and *spots of Silver.* I will begin with the 2d.

1. *The exercises of our selves unto Godliness*, in all those positive duties which God requireth of us. Whether they may be more *internal*, such as *faith, hope, Love*, or more *external*, in our more *external communion* with God, in Prayer, reading, hearing his word, receiving his holy Sacrament. Or in our *conversation* before and towards men: I shall press these from this notion upon a twofold consideration.

1. These *exercises* are the way to keep Christ still at work, making for us these *further Ornaments;*

2. They are the *wearing, and using of these Ornaments.*

I say (first) these *exercises* will keep our Lords hand continually at work, so as he will never be weary but be still adding to our Ornaments of grace.

I have had occasion often in my former discourses to hint to you, that although God be ingaged by his covenant, and faithfulness, to bring the Souls of believers to glory, and consequently to give out to them such necessary supplies of grace, as shall make them meet for that inheritance, yet he is at liberty as to the gradual manifestations of his grace, to dispense them according to his own infinite wisdom, and his Peoples behaviour toward him. And the promises, of that grace, are made to the exercises of grace; Christ will be alwaies giving to those, who are alwaies working out their Salvation with fear and trembling, exercising themselves to Godliness. These exercises are those sacred means, in the use, and not without the use of which he hath promised the influences of further grace. Men mistake the promises of further grace, if they apprehend them made to any who do not their duty as to the fulfilling of them, when God had made those large promises of which you read, *Ezek.* 36. He concludeth, *v.* 37. *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of* Israel *to do it for them.* I will do it saith God, but yet I *will be inquired of to do it for them.* And for that promise, *Matth.* 13. 12. *Whosoever hath to him it shall be given, and he shall have more abundance*, though by the foregoing verse where our Saviour giveth a reason why he

spake

ſpake to his diſciples more plainly then to others. *Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.* It ſeems to be a promiſe of further grace to thoſe to whom the firſt grace is given. Yet in *Matth.* 25. 29. where the ſame *promiſe* is repeated and annexed to the parable of the *talents*, it is plainly to be underſtood of thoſe *who have* and uſe and *improve* what they have; ſo as take thoſe two Texts together, they are a promiſe indeed of further grace to be given, but to ſuch as make a juſt improvement of what grace God hath firſt beſtowed upon them.

2. Secondly, Our *exerciſes of Godlineſs are indeed the wearing of theſe Jewels.* God gives men and women grace for their uſes, exerciſe is the uſe of the habit, and the end for which the Lord giveth it. What man will be continually buying clothes, and Ornaments for his Wife, who when ſhe hath them will not wear them? They are no Ornaments if they do not adorn us, how ſhall they adorn us in the ſight of the World (which cannot look into our hearts) unleſs we uſe and wear them? How can we wear, and exerciſe our grace, but by works of piety towards God, and goodneſs towards men? I will add yet one thing more.

3. It is but ingenuity in us when our Lord is never weary of giving out to us, never ſatisfied, never thinking that he hath done enough for us, to be thinking we have not done enough, nor can ever do enough for him, when we hear Chriſt ſaying to us, I *will make them borders* of *Gold*, and *Ornaments of Silver.* Should not we be ſaying, We will take ſome new ſteps in the ways of God, do ſome further acts of obedience then we have yet done, forget what is behind, and preſs on to what is before, unto the price of the high calling. Shall my beloved never think me fine enough? Adorned enough? And ſhall I ever think my ſelf, holy, and Spiritual enough? Serviceable enough to him in my generation? Shall not I be ever trying ſome new ways to advance Chriſt in the World, in my family, in my own Soul? Chriſt asks his diſciples, *what do you do more then others, Matth.* 5. You receive more, but what do you do more? Every good Chriſtian ſhould ask himſelf theſe two queſtions,

1. *What do I more then others?* I have more mercy then others,

others, what do I more than they? It is a shame for a Christian to do no more than a Publican, a poor wretch that never tasted how good the Lord is; yea it is a shame for him to do no more than he who hath not received the measures of grace which he hath received.

The 2d Question I would have him propound to himself is, *What do I do more than I was wont to do?* Wherein do I go on from strength to strength? Wherein do I exceed my self? Christ is preparing new measures of grace for, giving out new measures of grace to me? What new affections have I for Jesus Christ? What new performances do I do for him? The second thing in which I told you *Holiness* lay, was in *mortification of lusts*, and *vitious habits, in eschewing evil*, &c. Is our Lord making and preparing new Ornaments for Believers? How should they be *afraid to grieve and dishonour him*? This Notion affords a double Argument, whereby to press this second part of Holiness. 1. From *Ingenuity*. It is no way ingenous, and becoming Christians, to be pulling Jewels (as it were) out of Christ's Crown, while he is adding Jewels to our Crown, to be spoiling Christ of his Honour and Glory, while he is consulting our honour and satisfaction. O therefore *grieve not his holy Spirit!* 2. *There will by it arise a disadvantage to your Immortal Souls.* What Husband will still be bringing *new Ornaments to a froward and disobedient Wife*, that taketh no care to please him? Duty may oblige him to see that she shall not want necessaries, but he will certainly cut her short of superfluities. God in this, as I have shewed you, deals after the manner of men. God's Covenant, his Truth and Faithfulness to that, will oblige him, notwithstanding his Peoples frowardness, to give them what grace is necessary to bring them to Heaven, but they must look to be cut short of that *more grace*, which they otherwise might receive from him. The Soul of a Christian, who giveth himself too much liberty, may be saved, but it will be as *through fire*. When *David* had fallen into those two great sins of *Adultery* and *Murder*, I remember God sent *Nathan* to him with this Message, 2 *Sam.* 12. 7, 8. *I anointed thee King over* Israel, *and delivered thee out of the hands of* Saul, *and I gave thee thy Masters Houses, and thy Masters Wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the House of* Israel *and* Judah; *and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things; Wherefore hast thou despised the Commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight*, &c. God there aggravateth [illegible] not only

from those mercies which he had already received from God, but from that *Love* which was yet in his heart for him, and his *readiness* to do much more for him than he had yet done. Think when you have any temptations to sin against the Lord, that you hear Christ saying to you, I died upon the Cross for you, I washed you in my Blood, I have pardoned thy sins, clothed thee with my Righteousness, changed thy heart, put my fear into thee; and if that had been too little, I was ready to do for thee such and such things, to make for thee Borders of Gold, and Studs of Silver, and shouldst thou now favour thy lusts, which are the Enemies of Christ? shouldst thou now despise the Commandments of the Lord, and do evil in his sight? Let this ingage all of us to fulfil the Precept of the Apostle, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. Giving all diligence, To add *to our faith vertue, to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to our temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to our brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in us and abound, they will make us that we shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* I may add; If these things be in us and abound, our gracious Lord will be still adding to us, *making for us Borders of Gold, and Studs of Silver.*

I have now finished my Discourse upon this Text, and all I have to say upon the return which this blessed Lover makes to his Spouse's Petitions.

It now comes to her turn to speak, which she doth in the next words, *While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.* But of these words hereafter.

Sermon LI.

Cant. 1. 12.

While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

IN the close of my last Discourse, I told you I had finished what I intended to speak upon Christ's Answer to the Petitions of his Spouse;

Spouse. We are now to attend to her Reply to him, which is contained in *v.* 12, 13, 14. *While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my Breasts. My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of Camphire in the Vineyards of* Engedi, I begin with the first of these. Let us first inquire into the sense of the words. Concerning the *Grammatical sense*, there is little difference amongst Interpreters. We read it, *While the King*, some read it, *So long as the King sitteth at his Table.* The sense is the same, and the *Hebrew* particle signifieth both. In the next word, which we translate *the King*, there is something extraordinary, the *Hebr.* is שהמלך. There are two præfixes, ש and ה before the word which alone signifieth The King. I find Interpreters taking little or no notice of them; but I am willing to allow as few redundancies in holy Writ as may be. I find the same prefix, *Psal.* 146. 5. There it is prefixed to אל God. *Ar. Mont.* translateth it, The God of whom. Others, *Because the God of* Jacob *is his help.* If we may be allowed to interpret it so here, it runs thus, *whiles*, and *because the King sitteth at his Table*, and learns us that our *Spikenards smell* dependeth upon Christ's presence with us. *The King*, ה is demonstrative, or *emphatical*; I should judge it so here: As much as *That King*; Christ is a King above all *Kings*; he is *that King*, *The King of Kings*, the most noble, the most excellent *King.* The Spouse in these three verses giveth her Beloved two Names; she calls him *King*, in this verse, her *Beloved* twice, *v.* 13, 14. Christ's *familiarity* with the Souls which he loveth, and the freedom and boldness which he alloweth them with himself, ought not to breed in them low and mean thoughts of him. He is a *King*, and *that King*, whiles he is the poor Soul's *Beloved.* [*Sitteth at his Table.*] The *Dutch* and *French* translate it, *at his Round Table.* *Arias Montanus*, *in circuitu suo*, in his Round. The LXX *Interpreters*, who are followed by the *Syriack*, the *Vulgar Lat.* and *Tremellius*, *in his Lying down.* That we may the better judge which is the righteſt, we must know the Hebrew word מסב comes from סבב which signifieth, he hath compassed about: Thence comes the Noun מסב which signifieth a *circuit*, a *compassing about*, and that is the word here used; and (except in this Text) I can find it but four times in Scripture, 1 *King.* 6. 29. He carved all the walls of the House *round about*, 2 *King.* 23. 5. The places *round about*, *Job* 37. 12. It *is turned round about by his Counsels*, *Psal.* 140. 9. Those that *compass me about.*

So as the most literal Translation is, *While the King is in his Round*, whiles the King is round about. But by those that are Criticks in the *Hebrew Language*, it is observed, that it is a word which signifieth the form of their sitting, or rather lying down to eat meat (for so was the fashion of those Countries.) The use of *Tables* and *Stools* was not then known, but they were wont to sit or lie down, leaning upon their Elbows, and so to eat their meat. *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 16. 11. (speaking of their sitting down to eat) saith, *We will not sit down until he come*, that is, *David's Jesse's* youngest *Son*. In the *Hebrew* it is סָבַב we will not round it. Their meat was set on the ground, and their manner in eating was, to lie down round about their meat, and so eat, leaning on their Elbows, with their hand raising their head from the ground. The word only denotes to us, their fashion of sitting, or lying in a round figure when they did eat, as we now sit about Tables. Hence our Translation is good enough to express the sense; *While the King sitteth at his Table*, and the *Dutch* and *French* yet a little better, *at his round Table*. And the Translation of those who translate it ἀνακλίσει, *accubitu*, *recubitu*, *circuitu*, is also proper, because those words signifie the posture in which they did eat in those Countries. But there's no foundation for their Translation, who understand it of a *lying in Bed*, it doubtless signifies, *While the King sitteth or lyeth at meat*. It followeth [*My Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*] The word translated Spikenard is נֵרְד from whence comes the Greek word νάρδος, the Lat. *Nardus*, and our *Spikenard*. In holy Writ it signifieth two things.

1. *A Plant*, *Cant.* 4. 13. 14. *The Plants are an Orchard of Pomegranates with pleasant fruits*, *Camphire*, *with Spikenard*, *Spikenard*, and *Saffron*, *Calamus*, and *Cinnamon with all trees of Frankincense*, &c.

2. An *Ointment* made (in a great part at least) of that *herb*, and *plant*, and made liquid, that it might be poured out, *Mary* used it to anoint the feet of Jesus, *John* 12. 3. And the Woman, *Mar.* 14. 3. The *Ointment* is probably meant in this place, It may easily be gathered from those two Texts in the Gospel which mention it, that in those Countries it was a piece of their entertainment or their friends to bring *sweet Oil*, and to anoint their friends with it. Thence Christ checked *Simon*, Luke 7. *v.* 46. *Mine head with Oyl thou didst not anoint*, *but this woman hath anointed my feet with Ointment*. This expression plainly alludeth to that usage. I shall not trouble you with the

the various fancies of *Naturalists*, or their various stories about this herb or *Ointment*.

My Spikenard gives it smell.] Smells you know are of two sorts, either more *grateful*, or more *ingrateful* which we call *stenches*. The *Jewish Doctors* generally understand this of an *ill savour*, strangely interpreting this Text of the *Golden Calf* which the *Israelites* made soon after they came out of *Egypt*, after the commission of which Idolatry, they say the name of the *Israelites*, which before was exceeding sweet in the nostrils of God, stank and had an ill savour. But all of the most valuable interpreters of this Text, understand it of a sweet and fragrant smell which alone is proper to *Spikenard*. Thus far we have inquired out the *Grammatical* sense of the words.

Let us further inquire, 1. *What is meant by the King sitting at his table.*

2. *What is meant by the Spouses Spikenard sending or giving out the smell thereof.*

By *the King, that King*, is doubtless meant the same Person whom the Spouse in the two next verses calleth her *Beloved*, by whom we have all along understood the Lord Jesus Christ; the only question here is what is meant by *his sitting at his table* Some by it understand *his Incarnation*, the time during which he tabled with us; others his *glorified estate* (so *Tremellius*.) I think *Genebrard* hitteth the sense right, who saith, the phrase *Denotat præsentiam Christi cum Ecclesia*, signifyeth the presence of Christ with his Church. Thus also *Mercer* interpreteth it, *while Christ* (saith he) *is present with his Church, feeding it with his Word*, the Church sendeth forth the sweet smells of Faith, grace, and good works, as *Paul* saith, *we are a sweet savour unto God*. And what he saith of the presence of Christ with the Church, is as true concerning his presence with the particular Soul that believeth in him; he who sitteth with another at the table hath a fellowship and communion with him *while Christ vouchsafeth me his presence*. That I take to be the sense of this Phrase. You read in the *Gospel* of a *Marriage Supper* which the King provided for his Son. And *Rev.* 19. 9. You read of the *Marriage Supper* of the Lamb, and God promiseth, *Rev.* 3. 20. That if any man opens to him while he standeth at the door and *knocketh*, he will *come in, and sup with him*. Which phrases only note Gods nearness of presence, intimacy of fellowship, and communion with his People.

The

The next question is what is here meant by *the smell thereof*. *Tremellius* translates it *Nardinum*, that which is of spikenard, taking the *Suffix* ו not as a Pronoun, but as forming a *Noun adjective*. So it should be read thus, *while the King sitteth at his Table, that which is of Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*, as if the *smell* related to the fulness of Grace which is in Christ. But I shall rather follow our own translation. *To send forth its Smell* (saith Mr. *Durham* on the Text) *is to be in lively exercise: Grace without smell or lively exercise being like flowers somewhat withered, that savour not, nor like unbeaten spice that sends not forth its savour.* My grace is in exercise, that is his Sense. But 2dly. The *smell of a thing* is that which *discovers a thing*, & that both to *our selves*, and *to others*. Not only the motions, and vigorous actings and exercises of grace, but the *Notifications* and *discoveries of it*, both to our selves and others, depends upon Christs presence with, and influence upon the Soul, that is possessed of it. Two *Propositions* of Doctrine arise from the words thus opened.

1. Prop. *That true grace will give its proper smell.*
2. Prop. *The smell of the Saints grace doth much depend upon Christs influence upon them and communion with them.*

I cannot but observe the connexion of this verse with the two former. Her beloved had told her that *her Cheeks were comely with Rowes of Jewels, her Neck with Chains of Gold*, he had been commending her for her grace & holy conversation in the World. Ay (saith she) while my beloved, while the King *sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.* So long as it pleaseth the Lord to keep my Soul company, to vouchsafe me his gracious influence, so long I can do something, those habits of grace with which he hath blessed me, so long send forth their smell, but if he hath withdrawn himself from me, if he withholdeth his blessed influences, my grace moveth not, smelleth not. But before I can reach that, I would willingly speak something to the first Proposition concerning the nature of true grace, to send forth a smell, a peculiar smell.

1. Prop. *True grace where it is will send forth a proper smell.*

The *Philosopher* tells us that a smell *is a quality of a mixed body which is drawn out by heat, arising from a due temperament of things in it which are hot and moist.* But I have nothing to do with the *Philosophical notion* of a smell, it is here without question taken *Metaphorically*, and (as I before hinted) signifieth

Motion

Motion, and *discovery*. In all smells, that arise from things, there is 1. *Something of motion*, the thing giving out the smell moveth, and sends some quality into the air. The smell of grace signifies the motion and exercise of it, 2. *There is in smells something of discovery*. By the smell of a thing we both discover *the place* of the thing, and know where it is, and also the *nature of things* in a great measure. I will open my meaning to you in this proposition in three conclusions shortly.

Where a truth of grace is in the Soul it will not lye hid, but *discover it self* both *to him* that hath it, and to *others*, or at least to one of them. A man may carry dust in his pocket, and neither himself, nor others with whom he converseth know it, but he cannot so carry Musk or any odoriferous thing, if it be open; *grace* is a glorious light which God kindleth in the Soul and must not be hid, the Kingdom of Heaven which is *within us* as well as that *without us* is like unto leaven which cannot lye long hid in the meal. The *Romans faith* was spoken of *throughout the World*, *Rom.* 1. 8. The *elders* obtained a *good report*, *Heb.* 11. 2. Grace where it is will be heard of, *Eph.* 1. 15. *After I had heard of your faith, and your love to all the Saints.* The like he saith to the *Colossians*, *Colos.* 1. 4. It is a thing to be seen in its fruits and effects. *Shew me thy faith by thy works*, and I will shew thee my faith by my works, *James* 2. 18. The grace that dwelleth in Christ hath a *savour*; so we had it before, *Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments therefore do the Virgins love thee.* Grace is the *salt of the Soul*. Have *salt in your selves* (saith our Saviour) and salt must not be without a Savour. It is compared to *light*, to *fire*, neither of which will be restrained. 1 Conclus.

Secondly *grace doth not send forth a Savour only, but a sweet savour*, like the Savour of *Spikenard* which is very *grateful* to the exterior senses. Corruption, and lust hath a savour. The Savour of the *body of death* is like the Savour of the *dead body* when putrefied. Lusts are like *Solomons dead flyes* which send forth a *stinking Savour*, *Eccles.* 10. 1. The Drunkard hath a smell of drink. The unclean Person hath a smell, but it is a stinking Savour; the *Covetous Worldling*, hath an earthy Savour and smell. But the Savour of the Saints grace is a sweet smelling Savour; his garments smell of *Myrrh*, *Aloes*, and *Cassia*, His smell is *as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blest* (as *Isaac*; 2 Conclus.

Isaac said of his Son, *Gen.* 27. 27. like the *smell* of *Lebanon*, mentioned, *Hosea* 14. 6. All the Children of Gods garments *smell of Myrrh*, *Psal.* 45. 8. The Lord smelleth a *sweet Savour* from them. He tells us *he will not smell in the assemblies of wicked men*, *Amos* 5. 1. But *Paul was a sweet Savour to God*, 2. *Cor.* 2. 15. And the Apostle calls the alms of the Saints, *an odor of a sweet smell, a Sacrifice acceptable unto God*, *Eph.* 4. 18. Their grace sends forth a sweet smell amongst the People of God who are partakers of the same grace, yea even into the World, that even those who know little of God, or of the mysteries of his Kingdom yet many times will speak well of them and stand up in their defence.

Concluf. Though grace at all times sends forth a smell, yet it doth not give a like *smell*, in all times and in all Persons. Things (you know) that are most odoriferous, give out a smell according to the *quantity* of them, and according to the *heat* which cometh to them, a *dram of Musk* doth not give out such a *smell* as a pound giveth, nor doth the most *Aromatick Ointment* in the *Winter*, or when it is kept in the cold, give out such a smell, as when it is kept in a warm hand, or influenced by the warm beams of the Sun, or brought near to a warm fire, it is so with our habits of grace they have in them a sweet smelling Savour, but exert it variously.

1. *According to the different degrees of grace in the Soul.* Every Child of God hath his *μέτρον πίστεως*, his measure of grace, but every one hath not a *like measure* the faith of one is weak and little like a *grane of mustard seed* which is the least of all seeds, yet groweth up to a great tree, the faith of another may be so strong as to remove mountains; according to the degrees of our infused habits of grace so will the smell of them be.

2. *According to the influence of Christ (who is the Sun of Righteousnes) so also will the smell of our grace be* weaker or stronger. Three things contribute much to the smell of any odoriferous thing, 1. *Heat*, 2. *Air*, 3. *Motion*. Heat eliciteth and draweth out the *odoriferous quality*, *air* conveyeth it to the sense, *motion rarifieth the part*. Three things also much contribute to the sweet smell of the Saints grace.

1. The *influence of the Sun of righteousnes* upon the Soul. Therefore our Spouse here saith, *While the King sitteth at his table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof*. 2. The *Breath-*

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ings of the holy Spirit which our Saviour compareth to the wind blowing where it listeth, 3. *Motion*, the exercise of grace. As the Ointment doth not smell so sweet in the box as when it is poured out, so it is grace in motion and exercise that causeth the sweet smell thereof. When *Mary poured out* her Ointment, the house was filled with the *Odour* of it, *John.* 12. 3. and Christs name is compared in this Chapter to *Ointment poured out*, which is exceeding *sweet*.

Doth any now further ask whence it is that true grace wherever it resides will send forth its smell? I answer,

1. *It is from the Nature of it.* It is some peculiar quality in the nature of a thing which makes it to send forth a pleasant smell, what that is in natural things is not easy to determine. The *Philosopher* saith it is a quality which ariseth from a due temperament of something that is dry, and Savoury, and something which is moist; (It is an account of it which will hardly bear a strict *Examen*) that it is a *peculiar quality* is most certain: So it is from the peculiar quality of gracious habits that they send forth their pleasant smell, and of that I think a more easy and certain account may be given what it is. 1. *Its conformity to the Holy Nature of God.* 2. Its *proportion* and *conformity* to the reason of man. 3. Its life and activity. 1. *In gracious habits there is a conformity to the Holy Nature of God.* Hence gracious Souls are said to be partakers of the Divine Nature, conformable to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. The light of Nature shews the greatest part of mankind, that there is a God, Reason tells us, this God must be the Supreme, first, and most perfect Being, from hence it followeth, that the excellency of every thing lyeth in a conformity to God, who himself is the most perfect Being, and the Pattern of all perfection. This must make it the most amiable flower in the creation, and causeth it to give out a sweet smell to all who have not lost their smelling, debauching their reason by their most sordid lusts, and passions. 2. In all gracious habits and exercises, there is also a *conformity to humane reason.* There are in man some reliques of that reason in which much of the Original image of God wherein man was created lay, for *Right reason* (which *Socinians* so much talk of) it existeth in no man or Woman perfectly by nature, but some judgment remains of what is *good* and *filthy*, some *notions* of *good and Evil*, though very imperfect, now all

gracious habits will approve themselves, and all gracious acts do approve themselves to these notions, Hence all truly *moral acts*, are materially *gracious acts*: That is, the same acts which *grace* teacheth the good man to do, though from nobler Principles, in a better manner, and to a more pure, and noble End. So that so long as there are any men in the World, who have not outlawed their natural reason, and almost extinguished it by their brutish lusts, and passions, *grace* will give a smell, and a good report. And the great hatred which good and holy men meet with from the men of the World, is from this, that *grace* carrieth out the Saint beyond the *measures of the man of reason*: So that in some acts, especially of Religion, he cannot be bounded by his limits. The man of the World commendeth the Child of God, for his justice, and Charity, for his Sobriety, and temperance, his readiness to forgive his Enemies, his meekness, humility, his serving of God, *&c.* He is only angry at him, that he will offer up to God more and more excellent Sacrifices, that his measures of *praying, hearing, fasting, &c.* Will not serve his turn, *&c.*

3. Lastly *Grace is of a nimble, active nature.* It is the Fire with which the Holy Ghost baptizeth the Soul, and it cannot lye hid in the Soul.

2. It is *from the Ordination of God that grace sendeth forth its smell.* We may say this of every created *Quality*, which produceth any effect. It is from the Law of God in creation laid upon that Plant, Gum or Oil, known to the *Eastern People*, by this name of *Spikenard*, and the Law of God laid upon *Musk*, and sweet Flowers amongst us, that they or any of them, send forth a pleasant smell, the powerful hand of God in creation hath created such vertues, and qualities in these things, and God hath ordained that they should *emit, or send forth their savour*; and there is a daily influence of the *providence of God* upon them, by which these natural powers and faculties in them are upheld, by which they do produce these grateful effects to our senses, and daily affect the Air which we suck in, by which that gratefulness is conveyed to us: The like may be said of *grace* which is but a *savoury, sweet smelling quality* in the *rational creature*, correspondent to the other savory, sweet smelling qualities in *vegetative* and *sensitive creatures*: It is Gods creation in the Soul, and it is from *Gods Ordination*, that it sendeth forth this *smell*.

This

This is true, whether by the *Sending forth the ſmell thereof*, we underſtand the *exerciſe thereof*; Or the *gratifying the Spiritual ſenſes of others by ſuch exerciſe*: Both of them do proceed from the Ordination of God, which is the Law of God upon the New creature.

There is a double Ordination of God in the caſe. The *exerciſe* of a believers grace is from a divine *Ordination*, *Joh.* 15. 16. *You have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and obtained you, that you ſhould go and bring forth fruit.* We are choſen in him before the foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy, and without blame before him in love, *Eph.* 1. 4. *Predeſtinated* to *be to the praiſe of his glory*, *v.* 11. He hath alſo *ordained* the acceptableneſs of the ſavour of grace, both in his own noſtrils, and in the noſtrils of others, thoſe eſpecially, that are made partakers of the divine nature, And from hence it is that *grace*, and the actings and exerciſes of it, ſend forth a *ſweet ſmell* to ſome: And others reviſe them, and ſpeak ill of them. As it is in natural things, ſavours which are to ſome exceedingly grateful, and delicious, are to other creatures as ingrateful and abominable, which proceedeth from a different nature or different qualities in ſeveral creatures; all which are *Originated* in the *Creation* and Ordination of God: So it is with *grace*, the exerciſe of which is a ſweet ſmelling ſavour in the noſtrils of God, *let me hear thy voice* (ſaith the beloved in this ſong) *for thy voice is ſweet*, and *thy countenance is comely*, and a *ſweet ſmelling ſavour*, in the noſtrils of ſuch as are made partakers of the ſame *divine nature*: It is a *ſtench* in the noſtrils of *debauch* and *profane* men, and the lively and *vigorous exerciſe* of it is ſo in the *noſtrils of Hypocrites*; all this proceeds from their different nature and the *Ordination of God*, whoſe *Ordination* it is, *That wiſdom ſhould be juſtified of her Children.* God hath *ordained* that where habits of grace are, they ſhould ſprout forth in acts; there is a Principle of life in the ſeed of God, as in natural ſeeds, which being committed to a fitting ſoil ſheweth it ſelf. Nor is this without the concurrence of a daily providence of God, upholding this Spiritual, vertue.

Let us then obſerve, that *true grace* is *neither a dead and inſipid thing, nor yet an ingrateful thing in its exerciſe, to any that have any acquaintance with God, or fellowſhip in the divine nature.* The name of *grace* is an excellent name and every one would Uſe 1.

be called by it. Amongst Christians the name of an *ungracious man* is a name of such *reproach*, as every one is offended at. But alas! How dead, and insipid a thing must *grace* be, if all had it who would pretend to it, in the age wherein God hath cast our lot? Men would be thought to have *grace* in whom we cannot *discern one good work*. They pretend to *sp. kenard*, but where is the smell thereof? *Shew me thy faith* (saith the Apostle) *by thy works*. Nay how many are there in the World, whose *lusts*, and *corruptions* send forth an ill savour? It is observed in nature, that unless the four *Elements*, there are no things but send out some savour, some smell. Thence the *Philosopher* makes a smell the affection of a *compounded body*; all compounded bodies send forth a smell, little, or much, grateful, or ingrateful to us. The most of men and women send from their conversations some scent, some smell abroad in the World, but alas! The smell of the most is not like the *smell of a field* of a Soul *that the Lord hath blessed*, with the blessing of his grace, but *like the smell of Souls* which the Lord hath cursed, and will curse. One man smells of *drunkenness*, another *smells of the lusts of uncleanness*, a third smells of *covetousness*, a fourth of *Pride* and haughtiness of mind, a *Fifth* of *earthly mindedness*, *and covetousness*, a Sixth of *Levity* and *airiness*. Another *smells* of *cruelty* and unmercifulness, another of *lyes* and *perjuries*, breaking all oaths, covenants, promises, *&c.* These are not the smells of *Lebanon*, but of *Topheth*. God said of old, he would not *smell* in the *Israelites assemblies*, *Amos* 5. 21. *I hate, I despise your feast dayes, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though you offer me your burnt offerings, and your meat offerings I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.* There are some whose smells are such in the nostrils of God, with respect to their ordinary conversation, that nothing they do, or can do, will smell sweet in Gods nostrils. As some ill Savours are so strong as they drown the sweet smell of any perfumes which the Person hath about him. So some sinners smell so odiously, so abominably in the nostrils of God, that no good act they can do, is or can be acceptable to God; this was the case of these *Israelites*: They did some good things, the keeping of solemn feasts, the offering of burnt offerings were things which God had commanded, and elsewhere he calleth them a *sweet savour*. But such was the stench, the ill savour

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of the lives of these degenerated *Israelites*, that it had drowned the *sweet smell* in Gods nostrils which these acts had sent forth, had they been done by better men. What was the matter? *v.* 5. They sought to *Bethel*. They were Idolaters. *Jeroboam* had set up Calves, at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and thither they went to Worship the true God, but by, and before the Calves. They were *full of unrighteousness*, they turned *Judgment to wormwood*, and *left off righteousness*, *v.* 7. They *trode upon the poor*, and *took from them burdens of wheat*, *v.* 11. They were haters of Gods faithful Servants, *v.* 10. *They hated him that rebuked* in *the gate*, and *abhorred him that spake uprightly*. *v.* 12. *They afflicted the just*. They *took Bribes and turned aside the poor in the gate from their right*. These are they of whom God saith, I will not *smell in your Solemn assemblies*. To the same purpose God speaks, *Jer.* 6. 20. *To what purpose cometh there to me incense from* Sheba, *and the sweet Cane from a far Country*. Your *burnt offerings are not acceptable nor your Sacrifices sweet unto me*. And, *Isaiah* 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. Look as it is with some very strong natural ill savours, they do not only themselves offend our nostrils, but they so infect the whole air, which should bring the sweeter savour of some other things which we have about us to our nostrils, that nothing smells sweet; we smell nothing but the *Castoreum* or other stinking thing; so it is with rampant lusts and corruptions, with notorious Scandalous sins, whether the acts of impiety towards God, such are *Idolatry*, &c. Or acts of injustice, and uncharitableness towards men, they send forth such a strong, and ill savour in the nostrils of God, that the Lord can smell a *sweet savour* of nothing they do that live in such sins, he will not *smell* in *their Solemn assemblies*, their *Sacrifice are abomination to God*. God cannot away with the calling of their assemblies. Ah how many are there whose smells are of this nature.

2. Neither are these *smells* only offensive to God, but *to the Church of God*. The *Protestant Religion* may speak to these Simeons and *Levies*. *You have troubled us, you have made me to stink amongst* Papists and Atheists, and God grant that these spots in the assemblies of *Protestants* in our time cause not the latter part of *Jacobs* Words to be verifyed upon us, *That our Enemies gather not together against us and slay us, and we be destroyed*.

Secondly

Use 2. 2. We may learn from hence, *That a true Child of God need not set a Trumpet to his own mouth to blazon and proclaim his vertues.* The Wise man saith, *Let anothers mouth praise thee, and not thy own.* The Child of God needs not that his own mouth should praise him. *His Spikenard* will send forth the smell thereof, and that is alwaies a pleasant smell. Good Wine needeth no Bush, we say. We have a saying, *That Virgins should be seen and not heard.* God's Virgins should be so, they should be seen acting and exercising their gracious habits, *not heard* admiring themselves for them. It is the Pedler that goeth about the Country, proclaiming his *Pins*, *Points*, and *Laces*. The rich Merchant, though better furnished, leaves himself to the report that others shall give of his *Warehouse*. The naughty woman prædicates her own vertues, whiles the woman that is truly vertuous, trusts her reputation to those who see and observe her to speak of her as they find her. You need not write upon a Box of Spikenard, *This is Spikenard*; the smell will tell you what it is.

Use 3. From what you have heard, you may observe, *That every one is not to be condemned whose Spikenard sends not forth so strong a smell as anothers.* There is no Child of God but hath his *Spikenard*, his *Box of Spikenard*, his measure of grace, but every one hath not the same measure. The least of the Believer's Spikenard sendeth forth the *smell thereof.* But I have shewed you before, that in the People of God there are differences in degrees of grace. None can lay claim to the name of a Believer, or a Child of God, but he must have some faith, some love, some gracious habits, and must bring forth some fruits of holiness proportionable to his measure of grace. One Christian hath not the like measures of grace as another, nor the like influence of heat from the Sun of Righteousness to elicit the smell of those good habits. But of the necessity of that I shall speak more under the next Proposition. If a Christian's Soul be kept from scandalous and presumptuous sins, if he liveth up to those measures of knowledge and light which God hath given him, if ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, as we say, in the generality of his conversation, he walks close with God, though in some things his foot slippeth, a Christian is not to be condemned, if his *Spikenard* sends forth the *smell thereof*, though larger quantities in others, and under more incouraging and glistering circumstances, send forth a greater and stronger smell.

Use 4. 4. A Christian may hence take some comfort, *who doth not see his own grace* It is the case of many a good Christian, yea, almost of eve-

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ry good Christian, at one time or another, he cannot see his own Faith, or Love, or it may be any other habit of grace with which the Lord hath blessed him. Others possibly can see much good, much of God in him; he can see nothing in himself. This often perplexeth a Christian who thinks that he should know himself best. But the judgment of others is not alwaies to be despised as no foundation of comfort. Grace casts its smell, and there may be a time when a Christian's grace and Spiritual life may be more discernable to others than to himself. Nay, there are several such times; times of natural disturbances from *Melancholy*, times of *Divine Desertion*, times *of great Temptation*. In all such times, others are better Judges of the People of God's *grace* and *sincerity*, than themselves are; these things cast a mist before their Eyes.

5. I shall conclude this Discourse with a *word of Exhortation*; *To do what in us lies that our Spikenard may send forth the smell thereof*. It amounteth to that of our Saviour, *Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven*. I shall press it with two Arguments. Use 5.

1. *It is no Spikenard that sendeth forth no smell, no pleasant smell.* *James* tells us, that *Faith without works is dead*, that is, it is no true Faith. *John* calleth pretended *love to God* without *love to the Brethren*, no love. *Tantum es, quantum agis*, a man is so much, and no more a Christian than he acts, and liveth like a Christian.

2. There is nothing so *scandalous in the World, so dishonourable to God, so dangerous and insignificant to our selves, as the name of Saints, without the smell of Saints*. The World expects that things and persons should in some measure answer their names; hence it is that the falls and slips of Christians make a greater noise, and give a greater offence to the World, than the grosser actions of persons who make no pretences to Religion and Godliness. For Branches in Christ, which bring forth no fruit, Christ tells us, the *Husbandman*, his Father, will cut them off. These are they who bring up an evil report upon the wales of God, and make them to be abhorred. Nor can an empty name be of any significancy to our selves.

I shall shut up this Discourse with a few Directions.

1. Would you have your Spikenard send forth the *smell thereof*? *Take heed then of Dead Flies*. The Wise man tells us, That one Dead Fly will make the Apothecary's whole Box of Ointment to stink. What are Dead Flies in this case but *scandalous sins*, proceeding from our extravagant lusts and passions? One open scandalous

lous sin, will make a Christian's whole *Box of Spikenard* cast forth an unpleasant smell in the World. One sinful act will not lose us Heaven, but it will in a great measure spoil our scent. How many have we known, who, I hope, are gone to Heaven, who yet by their scandalous actions, (like *David*) made the Enemies of God to blaspheme. I hope they are some of them gone with *Spikenard*, I mean, with a truth of grace to their graves, but their Spikenard had wofully lost its scent. It's a sad thing when a man, of whom we can hardly presume, that he was in favour with God, and in a state of Grace, yet leaves the World, with a better report for justice and charity, for mercy, and bounty, and liberality, than one who professed higher, and went for a Child of God.

2. Take heed of *exposing thy conversation to too much Air* (I speak in this Dialect, to keep to the *Metaphor* a little.) Too much of Air spoileth the scent of the most precious Ointment. Take heed of too much needless converse with the World. Things that keep their scent must be kept close. It is true at all times, much more in such debauched times as we live in, the more recluse and private from the World a Christian keepeth himself, the better he will keep his scent.

3. *Keep thy self from actions, as to which, though thou art satisfied thou mayest do them, but they are not of good report*, either amongst Christians, or men of the World. It is too much the Errour of Christians, that in matters of *offence and scandal*, they only have a respect to *Brethren*. It is true, we ought to have a first and principal respect to them; I am sure our Rule is more extensive, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. *Give none offence, either to the Jews or Gentiles, or to the Churches of Christ*. The Apostle puts the Churches of Christ last, as if it ought to be the least of our care not to offend the *Churches of Christ*. I know no such thing can be concluded from the order of the Apostle's words: Yet one would think, if in actions of this nature any might be neglected, it should be Believers, whom we might presume to be of more knowledge and judgment, than to take any such offences; and if they did, so as they should reprove us for it, yet to have more love for God, than for any such actions in any persons to cause Religion, and the holy Name of God to be evil spoken of, our great care should be to have a good report of those *who are without*, and Christians carelesness as to this, is without doubt their great Errour, we ought not only to follow things that are *just, and honest, and pure*, but things also that are *lovely*, and

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of a *good report*, *Phil.* 4. 8. and *to provide things honest in the sight of all men*, *Rom.* 12. 17.

4. *You must live in the practice and exercise of Grace, if you will have it send forth the smell thereof.* It is the rubbed Pomander that is *sweet*. *The Ointment poured out*, which sendeth out a savour. It is not *Grace* talked of, but acted, and in its full exercise that sendeth forth its pleasant smell.

5. Lastly; *Be as much in communion with Christ as thou canst.* The King must be at his Table, when our Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. Be much with him in *Prayer*, *Meditation*, *Hearing the Word*. The Preaching of the Gospel is the *feast of fat things* upon the Mountains; and here, because it is a time when some of you are preparing for your duty of communion with Christ in the Ordinance of his Supper, let me mind you of your duty as to that, the rather, because I find our own Annotators, and divers other Expositors of my Text touching upon it in their Notes. That *Table* is the *King's Table*: It is called the *Lord's Table*, he is the Master of that Feast, as well as the Provision. It is an Ordinance which the Lord hath instituted for our Soul's fellowship and communion with him; Our Souls draw out from the Fountain of his Fulness, by this Conduit-pipe. *Neglect not that sacred Ordinance*, that your *Spikenard* may send forth the smell thereof; And *Remember while you sit there, that you do not restrain your Souls from God*, but give out your Souls in the exercise of the graces of *Faith*, *Love*, *Repentance*, *Thanksgiving* proper for that holy communion with this *King of Glory*.

Sermon LII.

Cant. 1. 12.

While the King sitteth at his Table, my Spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.

I Proceed to the 2d *Proposition* which in my last discourse I observed from these words.

Prop. *That the smell of the Spouses Spikenard, doth much depend upon Christs presence with her, and influence upon her.*

I have already told you, that the believers gracious habits are the *Spikenard* here mentioned. That the *sending forth the smell thereof* signifieth *the exercise of these habits*, to the *pleasing of God*, and the *honour of God in the sight, and face of the World*. This I say doth very much depend upon Christs presence with, and influence upon the Souls which is the thing here expressed, by the *Kings sitting at his table*. I shall prove this proposition by proving these four things.

1. That *all exercise of gracious habits dependeth upon Christs influence upon, and communion with, the Soul.*

2. *That degrees of gracious exercises, depend upon degrees of such communion, and influence.*

3. *That as is the exercise of grace, So is the smell thereof.*

4. That in *deserted Souls, grace doth not give out its smell.* Or at least very little.

Conclus. 1. 1. I say, 1. *All exercise of gracious habits dependeth upon Christs influence upon, and communion with the Soul.* God doth not only *infuse* habits of grace, but he also *eliciteth* the acts of grace. Hence our Saviour tells us, *Joh.* 15. 3. That *without him we can do nothing.* And the Apostle tells us, That *he giveth to will, and to do* of *his own good pleasure.* It is *Musculus* his observation upon *Joh.* 15. 3. our Saviour doth not say, that *without me you can do no great thing*, or without me you cannot do any great thing but *without me you can do nothing.* And the Apostle calleth Christ not only the *author* but the *finisher of our faith, Heb.* 12. 2. and 1 *Phil.* 29. *It is given to you on the behalf of Christ to believe*, a *power* to *believe*, that is the *habit*, but the Lord doth not only give us a *power to believe*, but to believe *actually.* *Acts* of faith, and holiness, are our *fruit*; The *habits* of either are *the seed*, the Acts are the fruit, and so are often called in holy writ, *Joh.* 15. 2, 3, 4. *Rom.* 7. 4 *In me* (saith God) *is thy fruit found*; hence a life of Holiness is called *walking* in, and *after the Spirit, Gal.* 5. 25. *Rom.* 8. 1. *I live* (saith the Apostle, *Galat.* 2. 20.) *but yet not* I, but *Christ liveth in me*; and again Phil. 4. *v.* 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.* To every good act there is not required only a *first exciting grace*, and a *working grace*, quickening, and determining the will unto the act: But a further *exciting, assisting*, and *cooperating grace*, Thus that ancient Councel (*Consil. Arausic.* Can. 9.) determined, *As often as we do that which is good God work-*

eth

eth in us and with us that we may work. Hence the *Apostle* saith, of himself, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *By the grace of God I am that I am, and his grace which was bestowed on me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly then they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.* In every good action of a regenerate Soul The renewed Soul acts, and God acts. Thus I remember *August.* asserted of Old. Some (saith he) may say, *Then holy men are acted, and do not act; Respondeo* (saith he) *Immo agis, & ageris & tunc bene agis si ab eo agaris*; that is, I answer, yes, thou both actest and also art acted and then thou actest well, if thou beest acted by him; For the Spirit of God which acteth thee helpeth thee in acting; he hath stiled himself thy helper, because thou thy self dost something; only here is to be observed a double difference.

1. The *first is the difference between Gods influence upon our natural powers to their natural acts and our Spiritual habits & powers as to their Spiritual acts.* God influenceth our bodily members, as to their *natural acts.* Without his influence we could not *move*, nor *speak*, nor do any natural act; but how doth he influence us as to them? By *upholding* our *natural powers*: And by *keeping off those things which would hinder their natural exercises.* God hath given unto man a Soul, indued with the powers both of the *Vegetative Soul* in plants, and of the *Sensitive Soul* in brute creatures, besides some more noble powers, which are proper to the reasonable Soul. Now these Souls act from this *natural power* in them, which being upheld in them, & not hindred by any *forraign*, or *intrinsick* cause, produce the acts that are proper to them: This is but an influence of *common providence*, and is common to all men. But the influence I am speaking of is an influence of *Special grace*: Not an influence common to men, but peculiar to the People of God who have experienced this grace.

2. The Second difference I desire you to observe is, *The difference betwixt Divine influences, as to the first and this further grace.* No man cometh unto the Son *unless the Father draweth him.* In the first grace the Soul is *meerly passive*; that change is wrought by *working grace*; this by *cooperative*, and *assisting grace*; the renewed Soul moves and acts from it self: It is only *quickened* and *assisted* by Divine influences. To speak therefore clearly, and distinctly, we say God hath a double influence upon our wills as to any good actions done by us.

1. He influenceth *our wills as the cause, Exciting our wills to the Acts.* Our wills are the cause of all good actions done by us, (the proximate cause;) we first *will* the thing which we do, *sed ille facit ut velimus*, it is he who influenceth our wills, and makes us willing, and then excites our wills.

2. *God together with our wills* (as the proximate cause) *hath an influence upon the effect.* It is universally granted by sober men, That there is a concurse of Divine providence, to the production of every *effect*; nor doth this concurse of the *first cause* hinder the *liberty of the Second Cause.* No Natural agent produceth any effect without a *concurse of the Divine power*, and a simultaneous motion of the Divine power. Some will have this influence of God upon us, as to Spiritual acts, to be no more then an ordinary concurrence of Providence. But I think the contrary will appear to every one who shall diligently consider two things.

1. *The imperfect state of the will of man even after regeneration:* Before Regeneration man hath *servum arbitrium*: A meer servile will. *Augustine* tells us that in the *state of Innocency*, mans happiness lay in a *posse non peccare*, a power which he had in that state, if he would, not to sin against God. The happiness of the state of the Souls in glory will lie in a *non posse peccare*, in this that they shall have no power more to sin. They shall be like the Angels in Heaven, confirmed in a state of purity, and holiness. The state of a Man or Woman not regenerated is *that he cannot but sin.* Now though the Regenerated man be by regeneration freed from the *servitude* of the last mentioned state, yet it is much short either of the more perfect state of the *will of the glorified Saints*, or of the state of *Adam in innocency*, we cannot say that their will is so stated through Grace, *that they have a power not to sin.* Even the best of men sinneth 7 times a day, and who can tell how oft he offendeth. We know but in part, and so may sin through ignorance, and oft times do so. We are men full of *passions*, and live in a World that is full of temptations, and are often *over-born.* Our will is indeed manumised, and *to will is present with* us, but our freedom is imperfect.

2. Yea I cannot understand, but that we should have need of a Divine influence exciting, and assisting us to our *Spiritual acts*, supposing that upon our regeneration we had been perfectly

fectly restored unto that *indifferency* in which *Adam* was created. For admit the *will of man indifferently free to move* to good or evil, what but the Influence of *Divine Grace* should incline and determine it rather to that which is good, than to that which is evil. But that which makes it much stronger, is the consideration that we are not restored to such a perfect liberty or indifferency, but there is remaining even in the best the *body of death*, *passions*, impetuous passions, which strongly incline us to that which is evil, and often prevail against us. *David* complaineth, *That iniquities prevailed against him.* *Paul* complained, *That he was sometimes brought into captivity to the Law of his Members.* Besides, if we could imagine that the *will of man* (though renewed) could be the *first Principle* of any spiritual action, it must be a First Cause, and man would be a God to himself.

But it may be some will say, though it be true, that the *will of man* cannot move it self to a *Spiritual Act*, but it must have a first mover, yet God's Influence upon it may be no more than the ordinary concurse of his Providence, such as he allows to all his creatures upholding their Beings, and their natural powers and faculties. I therefore add,

3. *That this may seem plausible to those who either do not consider, or will not allow those two contrary Principles which are in every renewed Soul*, but to those who believe and consider this, it cannot, *Gal.* 3. 17. *For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would*; especially when we consider also the advantage which the *Flesh* hath in us against the Spirit. Vicious habits and inclinations are natural to the soil of our hearts. It is a common observation, *Quod sponte prodit latius prodit*, what a soil naturally brings forth, it brings forth more vigorously and certainly, than what it is made to bring forth by Art and Cultivation. The heart of every man naturally inclines to motions and actions, contrary to the Will of God. Hence *Self-denial* is the first thing necessary to Christ's Disciple; this makes more than a concurse of common Providence necessary to a spiritual act. Now in our *natural motions* there is no opposition, and therefore an ordinary conservative power of common Providence is sufficient to their production, Nature giving no opposition to them; but this reason differeth very little from the first, therefore I shall not further inlarge upon this head.

4. Lastly,

4. Lastly; If we could exercise gracious habits without any *supernatural influence* exciting and quickening, and also assisting and cooperating; *Then we might from our selves begin, and carry on a supernatural act*: For suppose one indued with the habits of grace, he is only by these furnished with a power to believe, to love God, *&c.* The Question is, *Whence he acts and exerciseth these powers?* If this be from *himself*, then the *supernatural act begins*, and is carried on from himself, and God should give only to *will*, but *not to do*. The Apostle tells us, in 2 Cor. 3. 5. *That we are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is from God.* If it be answered, That as in natural actions God upholdeth the natural powers and faculties of the Soul; so in the renewed Nature, he upholdeth the *Spiritual Powers*. This is too short; for the Question is, Whence a Christian is inclined to this or that individual good action, and why more at one time than another; for there is a never-ceasing influence of God upholding the principles and powers of the renewed Nature; yet experience tells us there is not at all times the same *power* and *vigour* to act. Besides, in all God's influences and concurses of *Providence* with his creatures, his influence is according to the nature of the second Cause with which he concurreth. But when God concurreth with a *spiritual habit* or power in the Soul, he concurreth with a *Second Cause* which is *supernatural*, not a native quality in the rational Soul, but *adventitious*, *superinduced qualities*, therefore an ordinary concurse of Providence is not sufficient; and as the Second Cause with which he concurreth is supernatural, so the Effect to be produced is of that nature also. To all this might be added, the mention so often made in Scripture of the *Spirit dwelling in us*, *helping our infirmities*, *working in us*: And St. *Paul*'s telling us, that he *lived*, yet not he, but saith he, *Christ liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. and that, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *By the grace of God I am what I am*; *and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet NOT I, but the grace of God that was with me.* But I have spoken enough to the first Conclusion I laid down, proving that our *exercise of grace* depends upon the *Influence of Christ*, and that considering him not as *God only* granting his ordinary concurse of Providence, to all his creatures motions and actions, but considering him as *Mediator*, and from whom the *Spirit of Grace* proceedeth. There must be a double Influence of Christ to a *Spiritual Act*. 1. The *first exciting*, moving, quickening,

quickening, and ſtirring up the Soul unto it. 2. *Aſſiſting the Soul in it.*

2. *Degrees of exerciſes of Grace depend upon the degrees of thoſe Influences.* Chriſt tells us, That he came into the World, *that his People might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*, *Joh.* 10. 10. The aboundings of gracious acts depend upon the aboundings of Spiritual Life. This is ſo obvious to every man's common reaſon, that I need not inlarge in a Diſcourſe to prove it. Every one will conclude, That if without Chriſt *we can do nothing*, we cannot without him do great things, if we cannot think a *good thought*, we cannot *pray a good prayer*, nor do an act which muſt ſpeak a great ſelf-denial, and mortification of our members. 2 Concluſ.

3. *As is the exerciſe of Grace, ſo is the ſmell of it.* I have before told you, that ſome Divines ſay, the *exerciſe of Grace* is the *ſmell of it*. I had rather by it underſtand the *Acceptation* of ſuch exerciſe of Grace with God, and the *report of it* amongſt men, which indeed dependeth upon the exerciſe, and is more or leſs according to the exerciſe of it. The more a Soul liveth in the improvement and exerciſe of thoſe bleſſed habits with which God hath endued it, the more it glorifieth God, *Joh.* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; ſo ſhall you be my Diſciples. Abraham* being *ſtrong in the Faith, gave glory to God*; and the greater is the ſweet ſavour which the Soul gives in the World. There is nothing in the exerciſe of gracious habits, that is unlovely, or unſavoury to that part of the World, that hath not through malice out-lawed its reaſon; they are not the exerciſes of Grace, but the breakings out of ſin and corruption which give the Souls of Chriſtians any ill report amongſt the generality of the men of the World. Some few perſons indeed there are, who have ſuch a perfect rooted hatred of God in them, that as they ſay of the *Baſiliſk*, that it hath ſuch an hatred and antipathy to man, that it will flie upon the Picture of a man; ſo they will flie upon the Image of God where-ever they ſee it, or think they ſee it; but the number of theſe (though in it ſelf too great, yet) comparatively is but ſmall. The generality of men and women in the World are not ſo bad, but a good man living uniformly up to his Principles, hath a fairer quarter amongſt them. But amongſt the People of God, thoſe who excel in vertue, the exerciſes of Grace alwaies ſmell very ſweet, and amongſt all men under the conduct of reaſon; as is the exerciſe of theſe ſpiritual habits, ſo is the Chriſtian's *ſmell* more or leſs. The Ointment poured forth 3 Concluſ.

is that which perfumes the house, the reason is, because that odoriferous quality is by the Air, (as its *vehicle*) *conveyed to our senses*. So for men and women in the World; the habits of Grace in the Soul are not discerned but by the exercise. Indeed as to our *acceptation with God*, the reason is different; he seeth the hearts of men in their internal change and renovation, but he hath given them their gracious habits for this very end, that they should exercise them; he hath commanded the exercise of them; *Let me hear thy voice* (saith he) for *sweet is thy voice*. By the exercise of them he is glorified; a great deal of honour redoundeth to him from others. So as it must needs be true, that as is the *exercise of Grace*, so must be the *smell* thereof, whether you by *smell* understand *exercise* (as the smell of the odoriferous Ointment or Plant is the product of its odoriferous quality) or the *acceptation* of it with God, and acceptableness of it unto man. Where there is no exercise of Grace, there can be no *smell*; where the exercise of it is weak, the smell of it must bear a proportion; where there are the highest and strongest exercises, there is the sweetest and strongest smell.

4 Conclus.: 4. *Where the King is withdrawn from his Table, the Soul's Spikenard sendeth forth little or no smell.* This is my last Conclusion, in proof of the Proposition. God sometimes hideth himself from the Souls of his People. The presence of God with Churches, Nations, and particular Souls (of which you so often read in holy Writ) is to be understood not of his *Essential Presence*, for so he is never absent from any of us; *Enter, praesenter Deus est, & ubique potenter* (according to the old barbarous verse) he *filleth Heaven and Earth, & infinitum ultrà spatium*, an infinite space beyond what we can comprehend under these two terms. It must be therefore understood of his *Providential Presence* respecting his *goodness*, and such grateful dispensations as from thence flow to poor creatures. Now the goodness of God respecting our outward or inward man, God is said to be *present* or absent, with or from his creatures, as he dispenseth out good unto them, or with-holdeth them from them. Hence you read in Scripture so often of God's presence with his People in going out with their Armies, blessing them with successes, *&c.* And on the contrary, of God's hiding his face, and departures from his People, by his giving them up to their Enemies, his cursing them in their baskets and store, *&c.* As to their *inward man*, God is said to be *present with them* when he upholdeth their Souls to their spiritual operations, gives them quiet, and peace in their

Spirits,

Spirits, &c. to be absent, and to hide his face from them when he with-holdeth these Influences. God indeed doth never wholly forsake a *living man*, for he must then die and return to his dust; nor as to his *Spiritual Influences* doth he ever wholly *withdraw himself* from the Believer's Soul, for then his *Spiritual Life* must be wholly extinguished, the *Union* betwixt the *Soul* and *Christ*, and his *Spirit* wholly dissolved, but he oftentimes doth gradually withdraw himself; this is what we call *Desertion*. Take a Soul under these circumstances which enjoyeth not the presence of Christ with it as at other times, this Soul at this time *hath its Spikenard*, for the Seed of God abideth in it; but (alas!) *it sendeth not forth the smell thereof*, at least not so as at other times; the *deserted Soul* acts its Grace weakly, falls under many corruptions, and into many temptations: It is like a Flower in Winter, whose Root is kept in the Earth alive, but it doth not bud and blossom as at other times. It is true, God at such a time loveth the Soul, (for whom he loveth, he loveth to the end, but many of its actions in this state are not so pleasing to him; it crieth out, I think upon him, and I am troubled; I am so troubled, that I cannot speak, I cannot pray, I cannot sing praises, &c. Nor can its conversation be so sweet to men; it walks *dejectedly*, and troubled, &c. It is true, Desertions are of several sorts and degrees, and that Soul from whom God hideth himself as to consolatory Influences, may yet enjoy his presence as to *strengthening* and *quickening Influences*, but the actions of a *deserted Soul*, so far as it is *deserted*, are far from sending forth a pleasant smell. These four things are sufficient to make good the Proposition. *viz.* That the *presence* of Christ with, and his supernatural Influences upon the Soul, are highly necessary to the Spouse's Spikenard sending forth the smell thereof. I come now to the Application.

Use 1. Observe from hence (in the first place) *how little room is left for any creature's boasting, and how just reason the best of Souls have to walk humbly before their God.* We are naturally *proud*, and have hearts exceedingly prone to be lifted up above measure. God knoweth our *infirmity*, and hath so ordered the whole business of our Salvation, that all *boasting is excluded*. There are but two things as to our *Spiritual concerns* that we can boast or glory in: The *dignity of our state*, or *the change of our hearts* manifested in our *holy dispositions*, or *virtuous and pious actions*. As to the former God hath (as the Apostle hath determined) *excluded boasting*, by *the Law of Faith*, *Rom.* 3. 27. *Where is boasting then?* (saith he)

he anſwereth himſelf, *It is excluded*; *By what Law*? *Of Works*? *nay, but by the Law of Faith.* Would any man glory that his Soul is in a ſtate of righteouſneſs, and favour with God? What reaſon is there for that, if he be juſtified through Grace, and righteous only through the imputed righteouſneſs of another? If he be only compleat in Chriſt, all glorying of that Nature is excluded. What is then left for a man to glory in, will he glory in his *habits of grace*, the *renovation of his nature*, *&c.* So indeed he might if this change had proceeded from himſelf, if he had been born again of the *will of man*, or of *bloods*, but if it be *of the will of God*, if it be of *water, and* of *the Spirit*, which worketh as a moſt free agent, blowing where it liſteth, where is there any room for boaſting? Will he boaſt of his *good acts*? If it be not he that liveth, but Chriſt that liveth in him, if all things which he doth be through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth him, where is there any room for boaſting? God hath not left us a Feather to boaſt of: Will a man boaſt that he hath a power to will what is ſpiritually good? He boaſts beyond his Line, and of a Lye. For it is God who giveth *both to will and to do.* This is *gratia operans*, working Grace; it is working, efficacious Grace that giveth man any ſpiritual power; he cannot make his own *Spikenard*; it is indeed his, but *ex dono*, of God's free gift: But it may be when he hath it, *he can exerciſe it without any further aſſiſtance*; no, as he muſt firſt *receive the Spirit* before he hath in him any thing of Spiritual Life, ſo he muſt be *led by the Spirit.* If God did not excite the Grace beſtowed on him, it would be choaked by that body of death, that luſt and corruption which is in the beſt mens hearts. What can the creature do, when the Holy Spirit hath quickened his habits of Grace? he cannot act and exerciſe them, and put forth ſpiritual acts; but doth he no more need the Influence of the Holy Spirit? yes, without Chriſt he can do nothing; he muſt ſtill have the Grace of God with him, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Not I* (ſaith *Paul*) *but the Grace of God which was with me.* This is now *cooperative* and *aſſiſting Grace.* He cannot make the Wheel which muſt carry him in the waies of God, (*working Grace* muſt do that) when it is made, he cannot ſet it upon motion. *Exciting Grace* muſt oil it; *Aſſiſting Grace* muſt keep it up, move with it, or he will never come to iſſue any good action. A Believer indeed *acteth*, for the *habits of Grace* from which he acteth are *inherent* in him; he is not moved like a *Machine*, or dead Engine, but yet he is acted, that is, aſſiſted and helped in his action; He is *nothing*

thing but *what he hath received*; he *doth nothing* but *while he is receiving*. Let not then the Natural man glory in the power and good inclinations of his own will; he neither hath, nor can have any power to do that which in a spiritual sense is good, until it be given him from above. Let not the *renewed man glory in his infused habits of Grace*; for as he did not *merit it*, nor any way purchase them, so of himself he cannot *use or exercise them*: But let him who *glorieth*, glory in this, that to him *Christ is all in all*, that he *liveth*, he acteth, and bringeth a good action to an issue, but yet *not he*, but Christ that *liveth* in him, acteth with him, and worketh in him what he accepteth from him. It is Christ who layeth the foundation-stone, and then layeth the corner-stone, who is both the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*; we have nothing to do but to cry *Grace, Grace*, when we see the work done. In the mean time, nothing hindereth but that the Soul may rejoyce, and boast in the Lord, while it walketh humbly with God, mourning over the infirmity of its lapsed Nature; for certainly man did not come out of God's hands in the day of Creation in this impotent state. Let no man therefore despise those that labour under greater degrees of this impotency than he possibly doth, but let him bless the Lord who hath further excited, strengthened and assisted him to the operations of his Spiritual Life.

I shall shut up this discourse, with a word or two of Exhortation to every Child of God to use his utmost diligence to keep the *King sitting at his Table*, I mean *to keep the presence of Christ, as much as he can, in and with his Soul*, that so his *Spikenard may send forth the smell thereof*. I shall urge this by one argument, and then offer you my advice in the case, and so shut up this discourse. Use 2.

1. My argument shall be drawn *from the high concerns of the Soul in its Spikenard sending forth its smell*; every Soul is concerned in it three ways. 1. *In point of duty* as God thereby is glorified. 2. *In point of comfort* as it will evidence its *Spikenard* to be such indeed. 3. *In point of honour*, as it brings the Soul to a repute in the World.

1. I say first *in point of duty*, as God is thereby glorified. For this cause we are born, for this cause is every man come into the World, that he may bring honour and glory to his great Creator. Herein (saith our Saviour, *John* 15. 8.) *Is my Father glorified, if you bring forth much fruit*, and as the Lord

is glorifyed by the vigorous exercise of its grace? So is he also honoured, by the predication of his grace, by the *sweet smell* which our habits and exercises of grace have in the World. *That they may see your good works* saith our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. *And glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* That they may see your good works saith the Apostle, and glorify God in the day of their visitation; no man so glorifyeth God as he who vigorously exerciseth his habits of grace. The barren field is not that field which crediteth the husbandman, the barren and unfruitful Soul is not that Soul which bringeth honour, and glory to God. It is the fruitful Soul, *whose smell is like the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed*, that bringeth honour to God, and so eminently serveth the great end of his Creation.

2. The Soul is not only concerned in it *in point of duty*, but also as to *its peace and comfort*. Indeed it cannot be, but that comfort should result from the Souls performance of its duty for *the fruit of righteousness shall be peace*; but yet first, as he, or she that hath a box of Spikenard, or any other odoriferous unguent, or perfume, which casteth out a sweet savour to delight, or refresh others, doth first partake of it him or her self; so it is with the *Spouses Spikenard*, ordinarily, its *fruits of righteousness* do not only affect others, but first *affect* the Soul in which they are found, *hereby* (saith St. *John*) *we know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren.* *Hezekiah* upon a message of death sent by God to him was refreshed with the smell of his own Spikenard, 2 *Kings* 20. 3. *I beseech thee, O Lord* (saith he) *remember now, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done what is right in thy sight.* When a Christian comes to lye upon a sick bed, or a death-bed, it will be no grief of heart unto him, but a great pleasure and Satisfaction, to consider, that he hath with his Spirit served God, and indeavoured by holiness in all manner of conversation to shew forth the grace of God bestowed on him, not to have been received in vain.

3. Lastly *a Christian is concerned in point of honour.* A true Christian is an honourable Person, *born of God*, and he is bound to consult his honour, and repute in the World. It is the *smell* of a Christians grace, that giveth him a name and honour, a repute before men? The World taketh no notice of our habits of

grace,

grace, while they lye dormant in the Soul, but when they shew themselves in our conversations in the exercises of faith, humility, patience, *meekness obedience* then hath a Christian honour before men. Thus you see how a Christian is concerned to have his Spikenard send forth the smell thereof. Now seeing so much dependeth upon this, that a Christian should keep this glorious King sitting at his Table, it followeth that this is of high concernment to every Soul.

But you will say what can we do toward it, is not the Spirit of Christ free, as the wind, which bloweth where it listeth? May not the King sit or rise up from his Table when he pleaseth?

I answer, It is true, that our God (as to his *manifestative* presence with the Souls of his People) governeth himself according to the good pleasure of his will, and his own infinite, and unsearchable wisdom: The King oft-times riseth up from his Table when the Soul of his Child is able to give it self no account what distaste he hath taken, nor what hath made him to go away from it, and not to give out his influence as at other times, but yet it is as true that at other times, he withdraweth for the punishment of his Peoples sins, either of *Omission* or *Commission*, and there are some means to be used in order to the keeping of his presence with us, upon the Omission, or neglect of which he withdraweth, and hideth his face, and he ordinarily departeth not from the Soul but upon some distaste given to him; I shall therefore conclude this discourse, with a few *directions* given in order to the keeping of his presence with us. To keep to the *Metaphor* here used, there are four or five things, which will make a serious and ingenuous Person make hast from a Table, or depart from a place, where he might have made a longer stay, or abode. 1. The frowardness or ill humour of his host, 2. A discerned want of love or attendance, 3. An ill intertainment, 4. The dulness or unpleasantness of the company, 5. A discerned slight or carelessness of his presence. To avoid these,

1. *Take heed of grieving his holy Spirit*, quenching the motions of it, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man will open, I will come in, and sup with him, and he shall sup with me.* O Christs coming in, and supping

ping with the Soul, and allowing the Soul to sup with him, signifies what is here in the Text expressed, by the *King sitting at his Table.* And the Spouses *Spikenard, sending forth the smell thereof*; now this dependeth upon the Souls opening; when Christ stands at the door, and knocketh, he knocketh by the *motions of his holy Spirit*, the Soul *openeth*, by *its willingness to receive, imbrace and obey such motions*; the reason why this great King, riseth up from his Table, is, because when he knocketh the Soul is not obedient to his motions, he *pipeth* to the Soul, and it doth not *dance.* He *mourneth to it* and *it doth not weep*, it doth not answer his motions to it, according to the nature of them, but denyeth, delayeth or disputeth. God telleth the presumptuous sinner, *Prov.* 1. 24. That, *Because he hath called* and he *refused, because he stretcheth out his hand, and he doth not regard, but he sets at nought all his Counsel, and would none of his reproof, he would laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh*, &c. As a Child of God cannot be guilty of sinning to such a degree, as setting at nought all the Lords Counsel, and refusing all his reproof: So he cannot be under such a severe threatning as is there mentioned. But as the Child of God may in some degrees be guilty of such sinning, not hearkening to, and obeying all the motions of Gods holy Spirit, not receiving all its reproof; So for this he may be punished in his measure, by Gods withdrawings of his manifestative presence, take therefore the Apostles Counsel, *Eph.* 4. 30. *And grieve not the holy Spirit whereby you are sealed unto the day of Redemption.*

2. *Let this great King want no love*, no *attendance*, no *reverence* nor obedience, while *he sits with you.* When Christ was at meat in the house of *Simon the leper*, *Mary* brought a box of *Spikenard*, and poured it on his head, *Mar.* 14. 3. Christ sits still while the Ointment was poured out, it was not the smell of the Spikenard but the love of her that brought it, which made the room pleasant to him. He stirred not from the Table at *Marthas* house, so long as *Mary* sate at his *feet* and *Martha* served him. *Hear what* he saith, *Joh* 14. 23. *If any man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Say you to all the powers and faculties of your Souls to all the members of your bodies as the *Virgin Mary*, said to the Servants at the wedding

in

in *Cana of Galilee* where Christ was present, *Joh.* 2. 5. *Whatsoever he saith unto you do it.* That is the way to keep him still sitting at his Table in your Soul.

3. *Take heed there come nothing to your Table that shall distast him.* Every ill smell of *lusts* and corruptions will disturb him; this made him to hate the Jewish *feast days*, and *not to smell in their Solemn assemblies*, *Amos* 5. 21. If you look into *Isaiah* 1. 11, 12, 13. *Ch.* 66. *v.* 3. *Jer.* 7. 8, 9, 10. You will see what sins will make him to rise up from his Table: All formality, and hypocrisy in your behaviour toward him, all gross, and Scandalous sinnings, *&c.* When in stead of *wine* he meets with the *poison of Dragons* instead of *sweet grapes*, he meeteth with *grapes of gall*, and *clusters of wormwood*, he will not long sit at his Table in that Soul.

4. Not only the apparent *badness*, and *rudeness*, but the *dulness, and unpleasantness of a company, makes an ingenuous man rise up from his Table.* Take heed of heaviness, and dulness, inactivity, and want of delight in your communion with God.

5. Lastly, *As a discerned carelessness, and slighting of a friends Company, makes the stay of an ingenuous Person with his friend, much shorter, then it otherwise would have been*: So *any careless slighty behaviour toward this great King, may make his stay, and abode with your Souls*, in *the sensible manifestations of his love, much shorter* then *it otherwise might have been.* He will be a welcome guest where-ever he abideth; on the other side, he doth not easily rise up, or depart from a Table where the Soul inlargeth it self in testifying the gratefulness of his presence to it, by offering him all the entertainment it can afford him, giving up of it self to him, daily importuning him not to leave him. Thus you shall find our Spouse doing, *Cant.* 3. 4. --- *I found him whom my Soul loveth, I held him, and would not let him go, untill I had brought him into my Mothers house, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.*

Sermon

Sermon LIII.

Canticles 1. 12.

A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved unto me, he shall lie all night betwixt my Breasts.

YOU may by the Language spoken, understand who it is that speaks, it is the Spouse, for she talks of her breasts. Our business is to consider what she saith: She hath already expresst her grateful sense of her beloveds presence with her, and the advantage she had by it, her graces cast a precious savour. By the advantage of his company, and influence. She goes on still in the Language of one that *loveth*, under further Metaphors expressing her sense of her Saviours company. And she doth it in the Text,

1. *By an elegant Metaphor*; comparing her beloved to a *bundle of Myrrh.*

2. *By an affectionate resolution, to give up her self to him for an intertainment*; He shall stay, or he shall *lodge all night betwixt my breasts.*

I find Interpreters exceedingly well agreed in the rendring of the *Heb.* words, according to their several Languages. Only, *Montanus*, *Pagnine* and some others translate the verb, *He shall stay*, not, *he shall lodge all night* (as we do) the word will bear both: Let me therefore shortly run over the words.

My beloved.] דודי The Septuagint and Arabick [my Nephew] the difference is slighty, for it was usual in those Countries, for Lovers *to call each other by names of relation* (as it is not wholly out of use with us.) So in this Song, *chap.* 8. 1 *ch.* 4 9. The *Heb. word* in Scripture signifies 3 things. 1. *In the first and proper signification*, it signifies a *friend*, a *beloved*, an *Uncle* or *Aunt*, *Lev.* 10. 4. the *Uncle of Aaron*, *Esth.* 2. 5. The *Uncle of Mordecai*; and elsewhere it is used to express a friend or *beloved*, not less then 30 times in this Song, so also *Isa.* 5. 1.

and

and often to signify *Love* it self as in the 2d v. Of this Chap. and elsewhere, it doth also in Scripture signify a *Caldron* and a *Mandrake*. But those significations cannot be proper here. Whether therefore we translate it, *My Beloved*, or *My Friend*, or my *Nephew* or Kinsman, the sense is still the same. For *My Beloved*, is that which is understood: [*Is a bundle of Myrrh*] צרור המור Upon a survey of the several Texts of Scripture, which make mention of *Myrrh*, and the use of it, and a consideration of what learned men say of it, I do not think it easy to determine what it was; If I mistake not, the Scripture makes mention of Myrrh under a threefold Notion.

1. *Under the Notion of a Plant.* So in the fourth *chap.* of this Song, *v.* 14. *Thy plants are-- Myrrh and Aloes*, and *Pliny* tells us of such a Plant, that groweth in *Arabia* both wild and in Orchards about five Cubits high, and reckons divers kinds of it. *Plinius Nat. hist. l.* 12. *cap.* 15.

2. Under the notion of a *Spice, or dry perfume*, Prov. 7. 17. *I have perfumed my bed with Myrrh.* It is reckoned amongst the *principal Spices* for the *holy anointing Oil*, Exod. 30. 23. *Thy garments smell of Myrrh. Psal.* 45. So also, *Gen.* 37. 25. *Gen.* 43. 11. Though indeed the word there used be לט not מור. Prov. 7. 17. Exod. 30 23. Psal. 45. 9. Cant. 5. 1.

3. Under the Notion of an *Oil or Gum, or wet Perfume*, Cant. 5. 5. *My hands dropped with Myrrh.* v. 13. *His lips like Lillies dropping sweet smelling Myrrh*; *Esth.* 2. 12. It was one of the *Oils* with which the *Virgins* were perfumed. There are two other Texts in the Old Testament, where there is mention of *Myrrh*. Which may indifferently be understood of it as a *Plant*, or *Spice*, or *Gum*, or *Oil*, Cant. 4. 6. You read of the *mountain of Myrrh*. And *Cant.* 3. 6. Who is this cometh up --- *perfumed with Myrrh*? In the New Testament you find it mentioned in three Texts. *Mat.* 2. 11. Where the *three wise men* offered to Christ *Gold, Frankincense* and *Myrrh*. So, *Mar.* 15. 23. *Joh.* 19. 39. Where you read of *Myrrh used* in the burial of our Saviour. I am not hard to believe, that *Myrrh* is nothing else *then a Plant* which might bear, *the Spice as a fruit*. And *whose Gum* was that Oil of Myrrh or liquid *Myrrh* which we read of, to which purpose *Pliny* tells us that they were wont to slit the rind of it at certain times of the year, and from those slits dropped that which the Greks called στακτη doubtless both the plant, and fruit and Gum, were all exceedingly *sweet*; upon which Cant. 4. 6. Cant. 3. 6. Matth. 2. 11. Mark 15. 23. John 19. 33. *Plinius loc. prod.*

which account the Spouse here compareth Christ to *Myrrh*. *Grotius* says the plant was good for little but for the *smell*, and only grew in *Arabia*; but *Pliny* reckons many other *Physical qualities* it had. *Nierembergius* observes that it grows no where but in very *Southern Countries*. It is granted on all hands that it was a great Enemy to *putrefaction* which was the cause that the Jews (who some think learned it from the *Egyptians*) used it to embalm their dead bodies. Certain it is it was an exceeding precious commodity, for *Jacob* calls it *one of the best things of the land*. And it was one of the 3 Choice things which the wisemen coming from the *East* brought with them for a present to him whom they looked upon as the *King of the Jews*. Those four things we have learned by this discourse of *Myrrh*. 1. *That it was exceeding sweet*. 2. *That it was a great preservative against putrefaction*. 3. *That it was very medicinal*. 4. *That it was exceeding pretious*. But the Spouse compares her beloved here, not to *Myrrh* only but *to a bundle of Myrrh*, צרור Some question whether it were not properly translated a *box of Myrrh*, supposing the Myrrh a Gum, or a *bag of Myrrh*; Supposing it a *spice*. Others think a bundle or posy is well enough, understanding it of the herb. The truth is any of them all is well enough. The word comes from the Heb. verb צרר which signifies to bind, and it properly signifies, any heap or quantity of things, that are or may be bound up: It is translated *a bag*, *Hag.* 1. 6. *Job* 13. 17. a *bundle*; you read of the *bundle of lives*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 29. A *bundle* of money, *Gen.* 42. 35. *Gen.* 40. 35. Once in Scripture it is translated *a stone*, 2 *Sam* 17. 35. But it is to be meant of an *heap of stones*, and once *Corn*, *Amos* 9. 9. But meant of an heap of Corn. Christ is compared to a bundle of Myrrh. 1. *A bundle of Myrrh* is more sweet then a *single drop*, or grain; Christ is an heap of sweets. 2. *Men tye up things in bundles or boxes*, for their better preservation: Christ saith the Spouse is a *bundle of Myrrh*, intimating that she would be very careful to preserve the sweet influences of grace. But of this more anon. It follows לי]. To me: I do not think this particle is redundant, but exclusive. Others have no value for my Beloved; they have no sense of his sweetness: But *to me Christ is infinitely sweet*, *a bundle of sweets*, [לילין] *he shall lie all night*, or, he shall stay. The word in the *Heb.* signifies two things; 1. *Either to stay, and abide, and spend night in a place*: Or, 2. *To*

Grotius in Matth.
Plinius loc. præd.
Nieremb. histor. Nat. p. 105.
Gen. 43. 11.
Nomen aromatis K. M. Nathan.
Est ex speciebus Germinum, ib.
צרור
Hag. 1. 6. Job 13. 17. Prov. 7. 20. 1 Sam. 25. 29. Gen. 42. 35. & 40. 35.
לין

murmur, and clamour, and make a noise, so 'tis used, *Exod.* 15. 25. The former must be the sense here; and it is not material whether we translate it (as in our Translation) *he shall lodge all night*, as it is often used in Scripture, *Gen.* 19. 2, &c. or *he shall stay*, as others chuse to read it.

בֵּין שָׁדָי] Between my Breasts; this term hath no difficulty. The *Metaphor* is either drawn from *Lovers*, which delight to lodge in each others Arms, or else (as our own Annotations) from *Mothers*, giving suck to their Infants, who use to give them their *Breasts*, and to lodge *them betwixt their Breasts*; or from Women who use to wear Posies, and sweet-smelling things upon, or betwixt their Breasts; for the words [*all night*] are not in the *Heb.* but put in by our Interpreters. The meaning is, Christ shall have of me what he pleaseth. I will do what I can to get him to stay, and make his abode with me. Some lay some stress upon the term *night*, as if her sense should be in the time of persecution, I will keep my communion with the Lord Jesus Christ close. But in regard the word לילה doth not necessarily import the abode of a night only but a stay for some time, I cannot lay any stress upon it. Some by *the breasts*, understand *the heart*. Whose place is under the left breast. The *Hebrews* understand by the Spouses *breasts*, the two bars of the Ark, or the 2 *Cherubims*. Others, *the* 2 *Testaments*. But *in Mammis amoris signum*. There is nothing else meant then that the Spouse would entertain her beloved, with the most *cordial*, *affectionate* expressions and demonstrations of Love, that she might keep him the longer with her. *V. Mercerum ad loc.*

Mercer observes. That the Spouse had before commended her *Spikenard* for a *sweet smell*, but she here riseth up higher: Though saith she *my grace* be sweet, yet *my Christ* is more sweet, for he is as a *bundle of Myrrh*, &c. You have by the Apostle *Peter* a succinct, and plain exposition of this Text. *To you therefore who believe he is precious.* 1 Pet. 2. 7.

The Propositions of the Text are plainly these.

1. Prop. *That the Lord Jesus Christ is the Church's and the believing Souls beloved.*

2. Prop. *That the Lord Jesus Christ is to his Spouse a bundle of Myrrh.*

3. Prop. *That the Spouse of Christ will be very covetous that Christ shall abide with her.*

4. Prop. *That in order to Christ's abiding with the gracious Soul, it will allow him a Room betwixt its breasts.*

1. Prop. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the *beloved of the believing Soul.*

I do not intend to dwell upon this Proposition, because I spake to what must be the substance of this discourse, when I opened the 7th verse, where the Spouse had spake the same thing, though by another term. There she called him, *O thou whom my Soul loveth.* Here she calleth him דודי *My beloved.* I will only note to you two or *three things* about this term which learned Interpreters have observed before me.

Ainsworth ad loc.

1. That the same letters in the Heb. make up *David.* My *David. Davids* name signifieth *beloved*, and Christ himself was *Davids Antitype.* He was the Son of David, *Matth.* 13. 2. *David* was a type of Christ. 3. Christ is called *David*, *Hos.* 3. 5, *&c.*

Eng. Annotat. Ainsworth.

2. As the word it self is a *term of Love*, so the *Affix* makes it to be *Vox Fidei*, the Language of Faith; *My Beloved.* The believing Soul fiducially applies Christ, and cries with *Thomas*, *My Lord, My God.* The natural man upon the common Illumination of the Gospel, may discern *Christ* a lovely Object, but the Believer only can call him, *My Beloved.* Faith only gives an Interest in Christ.

3. I noted to you, that the word also signifies a near natural Relation, as that of an Uncle or Aunt, *&c.* Christ is near akin to the believing Soul; *he is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone*; he took flesh, that he might take part with them; he loves them as natural Relations, but by nature he is not akin to them; he is the Well-beloved of God; they are Children of wrath, but by the Grace of Redemption they are of kin: The Kindred arose from the *Marriage of the Divine Nature to the Humane Nature*; and from their marriage to him in Justification. *Both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all one, wherefore he is not ashamed to call them Brethren.* But I shall conclude all I shall say to this Proposition with that of the Apostle; *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be* Anathema Maranatha. I proceed to the second.

Heb. 2. 14.

Heb. 2. 11. Hos. 2. 18, 19.

Prop. 2. *That the Lord Jesus Christ is to his Spouse a bundle of Myrrh.* I shall speak to this Proposition, 1. By *Explication of the term*, and *Confirmation*; 2. By *Application.*

Qu. 1. *In what sense is Christ to his Spouse a bundle of Myrrh?*

I noted

I noted to you four things concerning *Myrrh*, and two concerning a *bundle of Myrrh*: I shall pursue them a little, and by them give you the sense of the Proposition.

1. *I told you Myrrh*, true *Myrrh*, was an *exceeding scarce thing, and therefore very precious, and of great value*; it grows but in some Countries, few have it, it is the best thing of the Country, a Present for a Prince. I proved this; *Christ is of great value to a poor Soul*; 1. *Not easily procured.* 2. When *procured of infinite worth.* He is the *Gift of God*, and God giveth *as a King.* No man *comes to the Son, but he whom the Father draws.* In the Country where *Myrrh* grew, but few got it. In a *Country* where Christ is Preached, but few get a portion in him: *One of a City, and two of a Tribe God brings to* Sion. *Judas* sate under the Myrrh-tree, and yet got no Myrrh. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* If they did not make their Incision into the Myrrh-tree, and that in a seasonable time of the year too, even the inhabitants of *Arabia* got no Myrrh. Even those that live where Christ is preacht, without laying hold upon him and receiving the drops of his blood, and that in a seasonable time too, in the *acceptable time* (as the Holy Ghost terms it) *while he may be found* (as the Prophet *Isaiah* speaketh) they get no part in Christ. The *foolish Virgins* may come when the Door is shut: And our Saviour saith, *Many shall seek and shall not enter.* 2. *Myrrh* when procured *was of high value.* Especially a great quantity, a *bundle of Myrrh.* So is *Christ*; Witness the Apostle, who counts all things dross, and dung that he may *win Christ*, who desires to have nothing but Christ, to know nothing but Christ, to be nothing but interested in Christ. Nay let the Evidence of the thing witness. *By his name alone we can be saved*, Acts 4. 12. By him we have *remission of sins, justification, peace with God*, indeed all spiritual blessings, *Eph.* 1. 3. He is *All in all.* Thus, you see in the first sense he is a *bundle of Myrrh.* Phil. 3. 7, 8.

2. I told you *Myrrh was very medicinal*, of this the Scripture speaks nothing, but *Dioscorides* and *Pliny*, and other Naturalists, tell us large stories of its usefulness. They tell us it is wholesome against *infection, helpeth women in travel, cureth consumptions, quickeneth the appetite*, &c. I shall not dwell upon this, because I do not think it chiefly intended: But Christ in this sense is to the believing Soul a *bundle of Myrrh*, healing *all the Soul's diseases*, *Ps.* 103. 3. He is that *tree*, &c. 22. 2. *Whose leaves* Plinii Nat. hist. l. 24. c. 26.

are for the healing of the Nations. He bindeth the broken in heart, Psal. 147. 3. What he did while he was upon the Earth, by his miraculous power as to mens bodies, Mat. 4. 23. Healing all manner of Sickness, that he doth now in Heaven for the Soul, by his saving efficacy.

3. Myrrh is (as I told you) a great preservative against putrefaction. Which was the cause of their using of it about dead bodies, either putting it into the body (after the Egyptian Method) or outwardly anointing, or embalming the body with it (after the Jewish Method.) Christ is the same to the Soul where he dwells, he preserveth the Soul against the putrifaction of lusts and corruptions. The Apostle speaks this, Rom. 6. 3. Rom. 6. 3. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein. Where he argues that the Souls interest in Christ arising from its justification, preserveth the Soul against putrifying lusts, that sin cannot have dominion over it, because it is not under the law, but under grace. But I hasten to the 4th which in the Judgment of Interpreters is chiefly intended here.

4. Myrrh, whether in the Herb, Spice, or Gum, is exceeding sweet. Hence you read of beds, and garments perfumed with Myrrh: Now the greater quantity there is, the stronger the odour must be: Christ is a heap of sweets, exceeding sweet to Cant. 5. 13, 16 the Soul; his mouth is most sweet, Cant. 5. 16. his Cheeks are as sweet Flowers, his lips drop sweet smelling Myrrh, Cant. 5. 13. Sweetness to the nostrils is nothing else but a smell thus arising from some hidden quality in the thing that emits it, and conveyed to the nostrils by the air, gratifies that outward sense. There is a sweetness, that is mental too. A Notion is as sweet to the Prov. 13. 19. Scholar, as a perfume is to a Lady, Prov. 13. 19. Desire accomplished is sweet to the Soul. Christs sweetness is mental sweetness, he is sweetness not to the nostrils, but to the Soul, and so he is a bundle of sweets: Let me unty this bundle of Myrrh a little. And shew you how Christ is sweet: I will open it to you in three things.

1. He is exceeding sweet in his actions as our Redeemer. As to these he is a bundle of Myrrh, there were many of them: His Uniting of the Divine nature to the Humane nature, in his Incarnation, his fulfilling the law, his death upon the cross, His resurrection, ascending, sitting at his Fathers right hand, making intercession for us. The Soul smells of all these by Meditation and faith,

faith, and the smell is like that of a bundle of *Myrrh*. shall I shew you how? 1. For his *Incarnation, wich the manner of it, he united the divine, and humane nature, by an hypostatical union, was conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a Virgin without the help of man.* Mr. *Ainsworth* and others think this Text, hath a special reference to this; this is Christ now considered, as *wrapt in swadling clothes, and laid in a manger.* The Soul smells of this by a firm and stedfast divine faith, believing the thing because God hath said it in his word, though it cannot see it by the evidence of *reason* and *sense.* And the Souls smells of it *continually by meditation.* And O how sweet it is to a believing Soul! Then saith the Soul (first) *he that Sanctifieth*, and *I that am Sanctified are both one.* I see Christ is not *ashamed to call me Brother.* 2. Then saith the Soul, I see *I have a merciful high-Priest, that knoweth how to pity a poor piece of flesh, hungring, and thirsting, and full of infirmities.*

3. Again here's comfort saith the poor Soul to me, I *was born a leper, under the imputed guilt of Adams sin, I was conceived* in sin, and *brought forth in iniquity*; But my Saviour was born without sin, the vessel was made pure, by the overshadowings of the Holy Ghost and no impure hand contributed to his conveyance into the World. I was born a *Child of wrath*, indebted to justice before I knew what I did, but he was born a *Child of Love*: He was born with a knowledge of humane infirmities to know how to pity me, but without sinful infirmities; That he might be in a capacity, to save, and help me. Again saith the Soul, Then I see a *perfect and sufficient Saviour.* One *meerly God* (considering the justice of God that could give no remission without blood,) could not have saved me because he could not have died for me, and so have destroyed him that had the power of death. One *meerly man* could not have saved me, for he could not have merited. But a Person that was *God, and man*; God, and man in one Person, must needs be in a perfect capacity; as man he died, as God he merited, nay the Person that was God-man both died, and merited. How sweet is this to the Soul, torturing it self with thoughts for the filthiness of its nature, troubled with humane infirmities, perplexed with thoughts how Christ should be able to save it, &c. This is but one of his actions.

2. *He fulfilled the law for us.* I am not of their mind that think

think that Christs active obedience is not imputed, I think the Apostle speaks plain enough to the contrary, *Rom.* 8. 3, 4. And if not he, yet the Prophet; *By his knowledge he shall justifie many.* You read that he was made righteousness for us: And doubtless (whatever some may fancy) the obedience of the Person which was God-man, could not be an homage due from the humane nature of Christ (which was indeed but a creature;) *Christ fulfilling the Law* is exceeding sweet to the gracious Soul. This poor Soul when renewed is but renewed in part, & in many things offendeth, and the sense of its daily backslidings makes it tremble. How sweet is it now to the Soul, to be able to conclude thus to its self: Though there be much guile found in my heart, and in my mouth, yet in his mouth there was no guile found, though I have been an *Absolom*, rebelling against my Heavenly Father, from my youth upward, yet he was an *Adonijah*, a *Son that never displeased his Father*, 3. *Look upon him in the laying down of his life.* How sweet is the meditation of it to a poor Soul? *Christ crucified* is a bundle of Myrrh; indeed from hence the Soul draweth many pretious smells, hence it is that the Soul *smells Spiritual life*, with all the consequences and dependencies upon it; Hence it smells *Spiritual liberty*, with all the sweet fruits of it: I say from hence it *smells* Spiritual life to itself, when it is almost suffocated, with the apprehension of the guilt of sin, and cries out, if I pine away in my iniquities how can I then live? And faints at the apprehension of the wrath of God due to it, for every single sin, and much more for the numberless number of the sins which it hath committed; It smells that of the Prophet, *Isa. Ch.* 53. *v.* 5, 6. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the Chastisement of our peace lay upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, v.* 10. His Soul was made *an offering for sin.* Or that of the Apostle, *Gal.* 3. 13. *Christ hath Redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, and this refresheth it; I have deserved to dye (saith the Soul) but Christ hath died for me. I have deserved to tread the wine press of my Fathers wrath, but he hath trode the *wine-press of his Fathers wrath alone.* I was born a slave to lusts and corruptions, but Christ by dying, hath made me free. Ah! what a bundle of Myrrh is a *crucified Christ to the Soul!* Hence it smells Spiritual life, even from his death, for we have *Remission of sins through*

Isa. 53. 5, 6.

Gal. 3. 13.

his

his blood. It smells *Spiritual peace*; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods elect? it is Christ that died, Ro.* 8.38. It smells an *access unto God: The holy of holies being Sprinkled with his blood,* and Heaven itself by it Sanctified, and made accessible. It smells *Spiritual liberty.* For the blood of Christ, saith the Apostle, *purgeth the Conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.* It smells *Spiritual strength.* For through the cross of Christ (saith the Apostle) *my heart is crucified to the World.* Thus you see that in this action (or suffering rather) Christ is to the Soul a bundle of Myrrh. 4. Look upon Christ as *rising up from the dead.* He is a *bundle of Myrrh* there too, the Soul from hence again smells *Spiritual life,* Rom. 4. 25. He *rose again for our justification.* Spiritual *peace, Rom.* 8.38. *It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again*; *Spiritual strength,* and quickening, *Rom.* 6. 4 5. *We shall rise with him to newness of* life, *Col.* 3. 1. *If you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above.* It smells *life from the dead.* This the Apostle proves, 1 *Cor.* 15, *Rom.* 8.11. *He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies.* Nay it smells *Eternal life* from hence, *Joh.* 14. 19. *Because I live you shall live also.* 5. Look upon Christ (as the *men of Galilee,* Acts 1. 11.) *Ascending up to Heaven.* Thus he is also a bundle of Myrrh, he *lives,* and from hence *Job* smelt, that he should *see him with his Eyes,* the Angels, that stood to wait upon his *ascension,* told the *men of Galilee,* so much, that as they had seen him ascend, so they should see him coming again. Hence the believing Soul *smells,* that he shall *ascend* too, for *where Christ* is *there he must be.* The *body is there, the Eagles shall flee* to it one day. *He is lifted up,* and every believer shall be *drawn after him.* Our *flesh and* blood shall inherit the Kingdom of God. For 'tis in part there already. Heaven is the place whither our *forerunner is entred.* Heaven was an open City before the fall, *Adam* and all his Posterity might have entred presently; upon the fall, it's gates were lockt up, the flaming sword of divine Vengeance kept it, but the *Captain of our Salvation* hath now entred, and he keeps the gates from shutting any more, till every believer be come in, 6. Look upon Christ as *sitting one the right hand of the Majesty on high:* So he *is a bundle of Myrrh,* too. Is it so saith the Soul? Then he hath favour with God, and power with God, and what need I any more then for my God, my Saviour, he

Heb. 9. 14.

Heb. 6. 20.

in whom I have believed, to be in favour with the King of Kings, and to have power with the Almighty. Nay saith the Soul, then I am half in Heaven. For, *Eph.* 2. 6. *We sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Christ and I are one, if he sits there, I *sit there too*; For he is flesh of my flesh. 7. Lastly, look upon *Christ* as *interceding for us*, *Rom.* 8. *Heb.* 7. He is not there Idle, his work is to plead for us, to sollicit our business, to act our part, to do our work. And thus *he is a bundle of Myrrh to every believing Soul.* When the poor Soul sinks in the thoughts of its sins renewing after justification: Christ is a bundle of Myrrh to it, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *If we sin we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.* When the Soul again sinks at the thoughts of its *imperfect duties*, to think that it cannot do a duty, but with so many faults, that it may fear the wrath of God for it. *What a bundle of Myrrh* it is to the Soul, to think, well, Christ is in Heaven, and he will pick out every fault out of this Prayer, this duty, *&c.* And so present it in the *golden censer.* Incensed with his merits: Thus now I have shewed you, how Christ is to the believing Soul, a bundle of Myrrh. Considered as to his *actions* as our Redeemer. It remains further to shew you, that he is so also, as *to his Spiritual influences.* And Lastly in his *Gospel institutions* and *Ordinances*: And then I shall come to the Application.

Sermon LIV.

Canticles 1. 13.

A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved unto me, he shall lie all night betwixt my Breasts.

I Proceed, in opening the *bundle* or *bag*, or *box* of *Myrrh*, which makes my Text give a fragrant smell. I have shewed that it is Christ, who is thus resembled, and have propounded to shew you the aptness of the comparison in five things: I am yet upon the 4th: He is to the believing Soul a *bundle of Myrrh* for sweetness: I proposed to open this in three particulars: shewing

shewing you, that Christ is so, 1. *In his mediatory actions.* 2. *In his Spiritual influences.* 3. In *his Gospel Institutions, and Ordinances.* I have done with the first and now proceed to the second: To shew you the sweetness of Christ to the believing Soul.

2. *In his Spiritual influences. When he ascended upon high* (saith the Apostle, *Eph.* 4.) *he gave gifts unto men*: he gave gifts to his Church: *his Ordinances.* (Of those the Apostle speaks:) but he gives other gifts likewise, gifts even to the *Rebellious*, *Psal.* 68. All these are summed up under one head: *The gift of the Spirit.* This is that which he calls *the promise of the Father.* He was the promise of the Father of old, *Ezek.* 36. 27. It was his promise, *John* 14. 16. I will pray the *Father* and *he shall give you another* παράκλητον, *Comforter*, and *he shall abide with you for ever: Even the Spirit of truth.* He is sent in Christs name. 26. *v.* he is called the Spirit of Christ: hence the influences of the Spirit are the influences of Christ. I shall instance in a sixfold influence, of the Spirit of Christ, upon the Soul, as to all which he is a bundle of Myrrh to his beloved.

1. The first is *his convincing influence*, Joh. 16. 8. *When he is come, he will reprove the World of sin*; In respect of this influence the *Spirit of Christ* is called *the Spirit of bondage*, *Rom.* 8. 15. They say of *Myrrh*, that in the gathering, it makes the hands of the gatherers exceeding bitter, but gathered, it becomes incomparably sweet: Thus it is with the Lord Christ as to this influence of the Spirit upon us, the Soul, for the time that it is under this influence, is *full of bitterness*: but it turneth to an exceeding great sweetness. The Book which St. *John* did Eat, was in the *Mouth as sweet as hony, but in the belly more bitter than wormwood.* A fit emblem of sin. The convictions of the Spirit of Christ are of a quite contrary nature, in the mouth they are as bitter as wormwood: but in the belly they are exceeding sweet; the Soul in the hour of conviction, is exceedingly sad, and troubled, but when convinced how it blesseth God, who was pleased to convince it of sin? Like the woman, who in an hard labour is full of pain, and wisheth she had never bred a Child: but being once delivered forgets her pain, and remembers her throws with pleasure.

2. A second influence of the Spirit of Christ is *Illumination.*

The Spirit is the Spirit of *wisdom and knowledge*, Isaiah 11. 2. *It teacheth us all things*, Joh. 14. 26. 1 Joh. 2. 27. *That is, all things necessary to Salvation.* The things *which Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive*; even these things are *revealed to us by the Spirit*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. Concerning the manner of the Spirits teaching, how consistent with the teachings of Ordinances, and yet distinct from it, I have else where shewed you: my business now is to shew you that Christ in this influence *is a bundle of Myrrh. Light is sweet to the Eye* (saith *Solomon*) knowledge is that about which the understanding (which is the Eye of the mind) is exercised, and is every whit as pleasant unto the Soul as *light is unto the bodily Eye.* Now as all knowledge is sweet to the Soul, so especially the knowledge, 1. *Of things hidden from others.* 2. Of *such things as are of nearest concernment to us*: especially, if the knowledge be certain.

1. I say, the *knowledge of such things as are hidden from others*: such knowledge we upon experience find to be very sweet, and such a knowledge the Spirit of Christ gives to the Soul. The Gospel of Christ, *is it self called a mystery*, a thing hidden from *ages*, and hidden *from the wise and prudent.* This indeed is more generally revealed to all, but *more especially* and fully, and clearly to the believing Souls. But further the Spirit of God reveals the *secrets of God* to the Souls of the Saints, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. Even the *deep things of God*, its *particular election* and the truth of its graces, *&c.* Now this knowledge is sweet to the Soul.

2. *The knowledge of such things as are of nearest concernment to us, is most sweet.* Such is *the teaching of the Spirit* it teacheth us to cry *abba* Father, it teacheth us to *see the things that are freely given us of God.* Add to this, that by how much any knowledge is more *certain*, by so much it is *more sweet*, the understanding is not so pleased, with probable notions, as *what is matter of demonstration*, and assured to the Soul; such is the teaching of the Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. It teacheth *by demonstration*, leaving no doubting in the Soul. This is a second influence of the Spirit of Christ upon the Soul in respect of which he is a bundle *of Myrrh* unto the Soul.

3. A third influence of the Spirit of Christ, is its *Sanctifying* influence, *Rom.* 15. 16. — *being Sanctified by the Holy Ghost*:

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It is Christ that *Sanctifieth*, Heb. 2. 11. Sanctification is expressed under the Notion of *being conformed to the Image of Christ*. Now as to this influence of grace, Christ is a *bundle of Myrrh* to the *believing Soul*. The unbeliever hates holiness, but the Child of God Loves it, and desires further degrees of it, *Rom.* 7. 22. I *delight in the Law of God after the inward man* (saith *Paul*, *Rom.* 7. 22.) He his highly pleased, when he finds the power of grace in his heart, overpowering lusts, and corruptions, and his Soul every day growing more and more like God, and like Christ, more full of Spiritual desires, Spiritual affections, his heart more willing to deny it self, to be under the plenary power, and Command of Jesus Christ when he finds, that it is not he that liveth, but it is Christ that liveth in him; Christ in respect of this influence, is to the Souls of his Saints as a bundle of Myrrh.

4. A fourth influence of Christ upon the Soul, is his *strengthening influence*, *Phil.* 4. 13. I can *do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*. He strengtheneth the Soul, 1. In doing *Spiritual duties*. 2. *In resisting Corruptions*. 3. *In suffering sharpest trials*. Rom. 8. 26. The Lord stood by me (saith *Paul*.) But it is not my present business, to discourse either of the several sorts of Spiritual strengthening influences: Nor yet of the ways and methods, by and in which Christ meeteth the Soul with strength, and Communicates strength unto it. My work is only to shew you that this influence of his is as a bundle of Myrrh to the Soul. Now that Christ in this influence is exceeding sweet to the Soul, needs no other proof, then the daily experience of the Souls of Gods People, how refreshed do they rise up from Prayer, when they have found the Spirit of Christ in it, helping their infirmities, with strong cryes, and groans? It is said of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. *That she rose up, and her Countenance was no more sad*. This was that which made the holy Martyrs take joyfully the *spoiling of their goods*, the *burning of their bodies*. And made them feel no more pain (to use the *expression* of one of them) then if they had been *upon a bed of Roses*. So that their Persecutors cursed them, saying *they had a delight to burn*.

5. A fifth sort of influences are *the Quickening influences of the Spirit of Christ*. I have formerly told you that the Scripture mentioneth a threefold quickening: All of them *from Christ*, and by the Spirit. 1. *The quickening of the dead body*, mention-

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ed, *Rom.* 8. 11. This will be as a *bundle of Myrrh*, exceeding sweet when it comes, when in the resurrection we shall be *like Angels*. And the thoughts of this are exceeding sweet, while we live here. 2. The *quickening of the dead Soul*, mentioned *Eph.* 2. 1. This is exceeding sweet to the Soul (when done;) Oh how pleasant it is to a Soul to remember his conversion, the time, the Sermon when, and by which God was pleased at first to work upon it, and work a change in it. 3. The *quickening of a dull Soul*, labouring under any Spiritual deadness, heaviness, or inactivity; of this *David* often *Speaks*, and *prays* for it, Psal. 119. *Quicken me in thy precepts, &c.* The *knockings* and *motions* of the holy Spirit, are tiresome and tedious, and exceeding grievous to a carnal heart, they disturb its sweet sleeps, in its bed of idleness, Security, and lust, but they are exceeding *sweet* to a gracious heart. The renewed Soul prays for them, thirsts after them, delights in them, and is never more pleased then when it feels itself most alarumed, and awakened, and spurred on by them.

6. The last sort of *influences* are the *comforting influences of Christ* by his Spirit. The Spirit is called the *comforter* often, *John ch.* 14. & 16. It is a piece of its office, to *seal*, and to witness; *It witnesseth with our Spirits that we are the Children of God.* It sealeth us up to the day of Redemption. I shall not need stand to prove, that Christ in these is as *a bundle of Myrrh*; The very name *comforter* imports *sweetness*, and is of it self a *bundle of Myrrh* to the Soul. Now all our *Consolations* come from Christ, *Phil.* 2. 1. 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. He was called the *Consolation of Israel.* And the Jewish believers waited for him under that Notion, *Luk.* 2. 25. I have now opened to you the 2d thing, and shewed you how Christ in his influences is a *bundle of Myrrh.* One thing yet remains.

3. *Christ in his Ordinances, and Gospel Institutions, is a bundle of Myrrh.* Christ is in his Ordinances. *We preach Christ crucified,* (saith the Apostle) and *we are Baptized into Christ, Rom.* 6. And for the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. *It is the Communion of the Body, and Blood of Christ.* Christ in these is a bundle of Myrrh to the Souls of believers. But indeed, Christ *in these* is only sweet upon the former account, *viz.* in respect of his *influences*, which he is pleased to convey in and through these *Organs*, and separated from these, Ordinan-

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ces signify little but burthen to the Soul. Ordinances are sweet to the Soul two waies. 1. *As God is pleased in, and by them actually to convey the influences of Christ, and his grace to the Soul.* Thus they are only *sweet* to the Soul, when it sees the *power and glory of God in his Sanctuary*, 2. *As they are under a divine appointment in order to that End.* Thus Ordinances are sweet to the gracious Soul, though at present, the Soul doth not meet with, and enjoy God in them: yet saith the Soul, they are those appointments, wherein God hath said he will be found, and instituted of God, in order to that end, and it may be my lot, as well as others, to meet with God in them, therefore the Soul prizeth them; how precious Ordinances (even those which were *carnal* (as the Apostle calls them) under the Jewish Oeconomy) were to the Servants of God who lived in those times, appears by the eminent instances of *David* in *Psal.* 84. *Psal.* 63. *Psal.* 42, &c. The Psalmist speaks of the Body of Jews, *Psal.* 84. *v.* 6. That they passed *through the valley of Bacah* and went *from strength to strength*, until *they all appeared before God in* Zion. And thus I have opened to you the fourth thing in this similitude, shewing you how aptly Christ is compared to a bundle of *Myrrh*, viz. For *sweetness*: but I also noted two things hinted in the term of *bundle*; a *bundle*, or *bag* notes a quantity of sweets. 2. Men use to bind up things in *bundles*, for their better *preservation.* Hence two things more.

5. Christ is a *bundle of Myrrh.* He is an *heap of sweetnesses*, exceeding sweet to the gracious Soul. The Apostle saith, (*Col.* 2. 3.) That all the *treasures of wisdom are in Christ.* All the treasures of Soul sweetness are in Christ also. There are other things that are sweet to the *Worlding*, and him that is a stranger to Christ. *Stollen waters are sweet* to the *Thief*, *Prov.* 9. 17. *The bread of deceit is sweet* to the *deceiver*, *Prov.* 20. 17. *Lust is* sweet to the *unclean* Person: yea and to the exterior senses of a gracious Soul other things may be sweet to the Child of God. But to the Soul of the Saint (considered as a Saint) nothing is sweet but Christ, he is its *bundle of Myrrh*, all the pleasure, and sweetness, and delight that it hath in the World on this side of Heaven, is either in the *meditation of Christ* or *application of him, fiducially*, or assuredly; all his hopes of good are in Christ. *Christ is in him the hopes of glory.* All his injoyments, which he valueth, are the enjoyments of Christ, and his grace, he is a bundle of Myrrh unto it.

6. Lastly,

6. Lastly, Christ is to it as *a bundle of Myrrh*, *In regard of its great care and diligence to preserve and keep alive its sense, and enjoyments of the Lord Jesus Christ.* The gracious Soul is very careful to keep its view of Christ. Observe the next words. *He shall lye all night betwixt my breasts* (of which hereafter.) Observe again this Spouses carriage, *Cant.* 3. 4. Upon her recovery of Christ when he had absented himself, *I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my Mothers house; into the Chamber of her that conceived me.* See also *Cant.* 8. v. 1. The Soul that hath had any experiences of Christ and of the influences of his grace, binds them up as it were in a bundle. The memory of that Soul is the bag and the string too. Thus the Psalmist *Psal.* 77. 5. *I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my Song in the night, v. 11. I will remember the works of the Lord, surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy works, and talk of all thy doings.* And indeed this needeth no further proof then what my former discourse hath given it, for it is very connatural to us, to be careful in the preserving and keeping those, and safe whatsoever is precious to us. The Worldling ties up his mony in bags, and is very careful to keep safely what he hath got with care; the Lady keeps her perfumes, and Jewels safe; so doth the Scholar his Books; indeed so doth every one, whatsoever he accounteth sweet and pretious: Now nothing being more sweet and precious to the Soul then Jesus Christ and his influences, it is as natural to him to indeavour the preservation of them. But I have spake enough to the explication, and confirmation of the point.

Use 1. Have you heard, that Christ is to the Soul, as a *bundle of Myrrh*? How sottish then is the generality of the World, that either despise, or neglect their interest in him. If ever a People *despised their own mercies*, and set *light by the rock of their Salvation*; If ever a People forsook *the fountain of living Waters to dig up to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no Water*: Certainly those are they who sit under the tenders of Christ in the Gospel, and yet do *despite to the Covenant of grace, and neglect so great Salvation.* Christ is calling aloud every day as in the fifth of this Song, v. 1. *I am come into my Garden, poor creatures! I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice; I have eat my Hony-Comb with my Hony, I have drank my Wine with*

with my Milk; Eat (O friends!) Drink, yea, drink abundantly O you beloved. Christ incarnate, crucified, ascended up to Heaven, sitting at Gods right Hand, is daily preached to poor creatures. And what is their language, other then that of the Prophet, Isa. 53. 3. *He hath no form, no comelineſs: There is no beauty that we ſhould deſire him*? People that live in theſe lightſome parts of the World, dwell upon the *mountain of Myrrh, upon the hill of frankincenſe* (to uſe the expreſſion, *Cant.* 4. 6.) and yet how few are thoſe that look after and diſcern any ſweetneſs in Jeſus Chriſt? What is the reaſon? Are not theſe men rational perſons as well as believers? How comes it that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is as a bundle of Myrrh to a believing Soul, and not at all pretious unto others? I will aſſign a double reaſon.

1. The firſt is their want of *Spiritual ſenſes.* There are but few that have *ſenſes exerciſed to diſcern between Good and Evil. Heb.* 5. *ult.*) the Carnal man is ſaid to be dead in ſin, *life and ſenſe* go together, the dead man ſmells nothing. The Natural Soul is a dead Soul. He hath Natural ſenſes, he diſcerns the ſweetneſs of Hony to his taſt, Muſick to his Ear, fair and beautiful objects to his Eye, Perfumes to his Noſtrils, the ſweetneſs of notions to his underſtanding, but he diſcerns no ſweetneſs in ſpiritual things, he *ſavours not the things of the Spirit.*

2. But Secondly, His *Noſtrils are choked with other Smells.* The vitiated pallat taſts not the ſweetneſs of the beſt meat, the Noſtrils ſuffocated with ſtinks diſcern not the ſweetneſs of the beſt Perfumes; the Souls of unbelievers, are filled and ſuffocated with the ſmells of the World: One with the ſmell of unjuſt gain, *Dulcis odor lucri,* he cannot ſmell the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, who commands him to leave the gain of injuſtice, to diſtribute and give to the poor, to avoid covetouſneſs which is Idolatry; another is ſuffocated with the ſavour of Worldly buſineſs and imployments, he ſmells the ſmell of a field which the Lord hath bleſt, the ſmell of his Worldly buſineſs puts out the ſmell of Chriſts ſweetneſs, he is cumbred about many things, and he ſmells no ſweetneſs in the One thing neceſſary. A third hath his ſmell adulterated with *ſordid luſts,* the ſmell of a drunken cup, of a ſordid wanton, ſpoils him for ſmelling this *bundle of Myrrh,* which is infinitely more ſweet. But give me leave to turn this complaint and reproof into an Exhortation.

Use 2. In the first place, *O you fools, when will you be wise?* You that are creatures of pleasure, and are not satisfied without a ransacking of the whole Creation for objects of delight, *Turn in hither I beseech you,* and *tell me if there be any sweetness like this bundle of Myrrh.* Your Eye engageth your Tongue to call the comely face *sweet*; Alas! A fit of sickness spoils the beauty of it, the Small-Pox spoileth that glory; how ever when death hath taken possession of it, you see no more sweetness in it, You hear the voice of a singing man or Woman, & you think it sweet, but that voice will one day grow hoarse, or you may be in a state, that it will grate upon your Ears, and be offensive to you. You smell a powder or perfume, and you must have it and wear it about you, because it is sweet: But what are all these to one Christ, who is sweetest to the Soul in an evil day, who doth not refresh the outward man so much as the inward man; whose sweetness ravisheth every soul that is possessed of it, never corrupts nor decaies, nor faileth, Imagine all the lines of beauty, which adorn all sublunary faces, to be brought into one face, that face must be very lovely: But all nothing to the *face of Christ*, in the Eye of a believing Soul. If you could rifle *Arabia*, and from all the sweet Plants and Gums, and Spices, which abound there, distil one sweet Water, or make one aromatical compound or perfume, that should have in it united, whatsoever is scattered in them, of pleasure to the senses, they would all be nothing to one Sprig of this bundle of Myrrh, to one beam of Christs countenance, the least breathings of his Love upon the Soul of his Saint.

Ob. Ah! But saies a poor Soul, you told us that *Myrrh* is not every ones portion, it only grows in *Arabia*, and every one there gets it not, you told us there was a season in which it must be got, and if that were lost, or if during the season, due means were not used, People got no Gum; I am afraid my season is gone, and know not what course to take to get it.

Sol. 1. What the Country of *Arabia* was for Myrrh, that is every place (where the Gospel is preached) as to the gaining of Christ. It is true there are many Countries where the Gospel of Christ is not preached, but *England* is a *mountain of Myrrh*, and it drops every day amongst you.

2. I told you that in the Country where the Myrrh *grew* every

very one gathered it not: But I told you it was *their own fault*, either despising through ignorance, or through lazines neglecting their opportunity in the Country where Christ is Preach'd, every one *receives him not*, but it is their own fault. I do not think it is true, in every sense, *that every man may be saved that will*; *This* phrase implies a power in our selves to Spiritual actions: but it is unquestionably true that *if any Soul sitting under the Gospel perish, it is because it will not be saved. You will not come to me* saith our Saviour, *that you might have life.*

3. I told you indeed that *there is a season*, (as there was for gathering Myrrh) *which if neglected, we get no share in Christ.* The foolish Virgins came when the *gate was shut.* Many *shall seek* and *shall not enter.* There is a *season of grace.* And some Divines think that this season is oft times finished while our life yet lasteth, and the means of grace continue: Whether it be so or no I cannot determine, sure I am, thou hast no sufficient reason to conclude thy season past, while yet thy life lasts, and the means are continued, especially if God yet at last give thee an heart to come unto Christ.

4. Doest thou ask what thou shouldst do? Remember what I told you, concerning the procuring of the dropping of Myrrh. 1. They made an *incision* into the tree. 2. They *set something to receive it. The incision* is made already. The Souldiers made that when they pierced thy Saviours side.

There is nothing left for thee to do, but to *open thy heart* to receive those influences of grace which freely drop from a crucified Christ: yea God must do that too. The truth is, thou hast nothing to do more then to go up to the *mountain of Myrrh*, to *wait upon God in his Ordinances*, to sit under Gospel dispensations and to *look up to Heaven* for further grace. Only remember the *full Soul loathes the Hony-Comb*, the full dish receives not the most precious liquor; and while thy Soul is full of the love of the World and love of lusts, it receives no Myrrh, while it is full of the love of pleasures, wantonness, froth and idleness, it is like the riven dish, that holds nothing. But to come to a conclusion,

Is Christ to the Believers as a bundle of *Myrrh*? Then hear me *O you Children of the most high!* I will urge but two things upon you as an improvement of this Notion. Use 3.

1. *Use him as a bundle of Myrrh.* I will press this in three

things. 1. *Be often taking the savour of him*: The woman that hath a rare smelling flower, or perfume, wears it in her bosom she suffers not the first to dye in her Garden, nor the latter to evaporate in her cabinet, but she is often smelling of it. Oh that the Children of God would make as much use of Christ, that they would not let his sweetness in a Gospel ordinance evaporate into the Air, nor the sweetness of his mediatory actions revealed in the Gospel die in sheets of Paper, but that they would study the Scriptures, meditate on the Word, think over Gospel Sermons when they have heard them! Oh that they would wear the remembrance of Christs actions upon their hearts every day, how sweet would it be to their Souls? How pleasant to their thoughts! the lazy student loseth the sweetness of those thousand notions, that are in his Books, because he never reads his Books, nor spends time in studying them: The negligent Christian loseth much of that infinite sweetness that his Soul might have by reflecting upon the Gospel story, and Gospel truths, for want of *meditating* upon them.

2. Be *exceeding careful to preserve* the *influences of Christ upon your Souls* and *your experiences of his love*. Shall the woman bind up her sweet flowers in a posy, and the Lady carefully tye up her perfumes in bags and glasses, that they might not lose their scent, and she the sweetness of them? And shall a Christian possessed of the sweet influences of grace, possessed of the presence of Jesus Christ do nothing to preserve it. Say with the Spouse here, *he shall lodge all night betwixt my breasts*; do as the Spouse, *Cant.* 3. When she had found him whom her Soul loved, *she held him, she would not let him go, till she had carried him to her Mothers house, to the house of her that conceived her*. Bind up your experiences of the Love of Christ in so many bundles, and do what in you lyes to preserve his influences in the Vigour of them, would you know how you might preserve them? There is no better way then for you to keep up in your Souls, an high value and esteem of them; it is ordinarily for want of love, that the *Beloved* withdraws himself.

3. *You are communicative, of your sweet perfumes*. The Lady cannot wear her strong perfumes, but others whom she cometh near will partake of her sweetness. It is of the Nature of the perfume to season the whole Air. She will hardly have a perfume, but out of a desire to have it taken notice of, she will

be

be holding it to the Nostrils of others. Oh that you who are possessed of the Lord Jesus Christ, *this bundle of Myrrh*, would be as communicative of that also: That you would be commending Christ (as the Woman of *Samaria* did, *John.*4.) to your Neighbours, Kindred, Children, Friends, Acquaintance, that they also might follow after him in the *savour of his precious ointments.* This is a piece of Christians duty. *When thou art converted* (saith our Saviour to Peter) *strengthen thy Brethren.* Thus to do good, and to distribute forget not, for with such service God is well pleased: But to come to a conclusion,

2. Is Christ to the *believers a bundle of Myrrh*? Let not *them be as bundles of Nettles to him.* The Bundle of Myrrh gives a pleasant smell, *cheereth the senses.* The bundle of Nettles Pricketh, and offendeth, and grieveth the Nostrils; It is the Apostles exhortation Eph. 4. 30. *Grieve not the holy Spirit by which you are sealed to the day of redemption.* The Exhortation is to holiness of Conversation: The Argument is *from the love of Christ to you.* The love of God *constraineth* (saith the Apostle.) There are many arguments to press holiness from, none so ingenuous, none so constraining to an ingenuous Soul, as the sweetness of Jesus Christ to it. It breaks the heart of an ingenuous Child to remember its frowardness to an indulgent Father, and a tender Mother. Love worketh much upon a good Nature. Study this Argument and the force of it upon your Souls to make you perfect holiness in the Lords fear.

Ser-

Sermon LV.

Cant. 1. 13.

He shall lye all night betwixt my Breasts.

I Have untied the bundle of Myrrh in my Text, that I might give you the fuller smell thereof. Christ is the Posie of his Saints; we must now find him a convenient place; the Text assigns him a Posies place, about, or betwixt the breasts, not upon her *shoulders*, as if he were her burthen, nor behind her back, where she could not view him, but in her breast, where she may be alwaies pleasing her senses with him. The Psalmist, *Psal.* 16. 8. says, *I have set the Lord alwaies before me, he is at my right hand, therefore I shall not be moved. De Ponte* notes, that the believing Soul in the time of spiritual Combate, setteth Christ at her right hand, but in the time of Peace she lodgeth him betwixt her breasts. It was an old usage, saith *Athenæus*, to anoint the breast with Myrrh, because of its vertue to strengthen the heart; here our Spouse placeth her bundle of Myrrh.

Not to trouble you with the strained fancies of Interpreters, concerning the Spouse's breasts; *In mammis signum amoris:* the place betwixt the breasts is near to the heart, and the seat of the beloved Object; it is the beloved Husband, and the Beloved Babe that is allowed to lodge betwixt the breasts. She might have said, he shall lodge near my heart, but she rather chuseth to say, *betwixt my breasts*, (which are an outward part, nigh to the heart) intimating that she would not only bear Christ upon her heart, but expresse her love, by living to Christ in her outward conversation. But not to overstrain the Metaphor, she doth not say, he shall *come*, but he *shall lodge*, or lodge all night betwixt my breasts. There are two Propositions which I named from these words, and which yet remain to be discoursed:

1. *That the believing Soul is wonderfully desirous of Christ's abiding with it.*

2. *That to engage him to such an abode, she will allow him a room betwixt her breasts.* The latter will be a proof to the former, & come in collaterally, while I handle the former.

Prop.

Prop. *That a gracious heart will be exceeding desirous of Christ's abiding with it.*

I shall speak to this Proposition in this Method: 1. Shewing you what are those *lodgings and abidings of Christ with, and upon the Soul, of which the gracious heart is so exceedingly desirous.* 2. *How it doth appear that a believing Soul is so fond of Christ's abidings with it:* 3, *Whence it is that she is thus exceeding fond of Christ's lodgings and abidings with it.* 4. *I shall apply the whole.*

Qu. 1. What is to be understood by the lodging or abiding of Christ with the Soul?

You read in Scripture of Christ's *abiding* with the Soul, and the *Soul's abiding* with Christ. The first is mentioned as our priviledge, the second as our duty. Of the first you read, *John* 14. 23. *My Father and I will come unto him, and we will make our abode with him.* Of the second, *John* 15. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is cut off,* &c. So again, *v.* 6. each depending upon the other; for it is *God's Covenant: I will never depart from you to do you good, and I will put my fear into your hearts, that you shall never depart from me.* Abiding, or lodging in the primary Notion, signifieth *the continuance of some corporeal presence* transferred to spiritual things, it signifies The *continuance of a priviledge*, or *perseverance in a duty*. Christ's abode with us signifies the first; our *abiding with him* signifies the latter, each of them expressed in Scripture, by various expressions. Christ's abiding with us, is expressed, *John* 14. 16. *By the abidings of the Comforter*, by the abiding of the *anointing Oil*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 26. It is opposed to the momentany, and short refreshings of grace, when to use that other phrase of Scripture, God is to the Soul but *as a wayfaring man, that tarries but for a night.* Our abidings with, and in Christ, are also variously expressed, by the *abidings of that in us which we have received*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 24. by *abiding in light*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 10. and the *Word of God abiding in us*, v. 14. by *abiding in the Doctrine of Christ*, *Joh.* 2. *ep. v.* 9. But I have nothing to do save only with the former Notion. In short, The abidings of Christ with the Soul import two things.

1. *The permanency of his Union with the Soul, continuing the state of Justification*, 1 Joh. 3. 24. *Hereby we know he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given to us.*

2. *The constancy of his gracious Influences upon us*, which *Joh.* 14. *v.* 21. he calls *A manifesting of himself unto us*; and *v.* 22. his *abode with us.* This is also the abiding of the μεσίτης, the Comforter

forter mentioned, *v.* 16. This is the lodging of Christ betwixt the Soul's breasts. This it is of which the gracious Soul is so exceeding fond and covetous: And so much shall serve for the first Question. I come to the second.

Qu. 2. *How doth it appear that a gracious Soul is so desirous of Christ's abidings with it?*

There are three waies by which the Earnest desire of our friends abode with us are discernable to others: 1. By *Verbal Expressions*. 2. *Real Actions*. 3. *Vehement Passions*. By all these the believing Soul's desires that Christ should lodge with it, have been, and are discernable.

1. *Verbal Expressions* (before the World was so far debaucht as now, that none knows by the Index of the Tongue what the Clock strikes in the heart) were sufficient Evidences of cordial desires. The Children of God cannot lye unto him, we may therefore from their words conclude still. If you look upon the Saints or Church in former times, see what the Church saith, *Jer.* 14. 8. *O thou hope of* Israel, *the Saviour thereof in times of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the Land, as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night?* The expressions of *David* in the *Psalms* this way are very many; this is it which he means by *the lifting up of God's Countenance upon him*, which he so passionately desires above *Corn, Wine*, and *Oil*, *Psal.* 4. for which he prefers the place of a *doorkeeper in the house of God*, before *dwelling in the Tents of wickedness*, *Psal.* 84. Indeed, if you look upon the whole sum of the desires both of *David*, and other Saints, who stand upon sacred Record, you will find that as to spiritual things, all their desires are comprehended in this one, that God would abide with them, lodge all night betwixt their breasts. And the same Spirit yet breatheth in the Souls of all that fear the Lord. I need do no more for the proof of this, than appeal to the experience of all such who have in the least degree tasted how good the Lord is; what's the sum of all their prayers? what's their language to one another, and to all the Ministers of God, to whom at any time they address themselves? but oh that they might find the *Abidings of the Comforter with their Souls*, the abidings of the strengthening and quickening Spirit of God with them! Oh that Christ would not be as a stranger in their Souls, nor as a wayfaring man that turneth in to their Souls for a night!

2. The Earnest desires of gracious Souls for the *abidings of Christ with them*, are evident also upon the consideration of what they

will

will be ready to do for the *continuance of them*: This is in part hinted in the Text: He shall lodge, or lay, or lie all night *betwixt my breasts*, which metaphorical expression signifies (by interpretation) these two things:

1. *I will deny him nothing which he shall desire of me, so I may but keep his company.*

2. *I will entertain him with the highest demonstrations of cordial Affection.*

1. I will deny *him nothing which he shall desire of me.* The Mother will deny nothing to that Child, nor the Wife to that Husband, which either of them allow to lodge betwixt their breasts. The believing Soul will deny Christ nothing, so it may keep his presence with her. Will he have the man do for him? *Lord*, saith *Paul*, *Act.* 9. 6. *What wilt thou have me to do?* Will he have the man *to die for him? I am ready* (saith *Paul*, *Act.* 21. 13.) *not to be bound only, but also to die at* Jerusalem *for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* Will he have it deny it self, distribute and give to the poor, make satisfaction where he hath done injury? No sooner is *Zacheus* told that *Christ was come to his house*, but he cries, *Luk.* 19. 5, 8. *Lord, the half of my goods I give to the Poor, and if I have taken any thing from any by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Will he have *Peter gird himself, and come to him upon the waters? Peter* will do it immediately. Doth he call *Simon* and *Andrew* from their Nets to follow him, upon a promise that they shall be made Fishers of men? and doth he by and by require *James* and *Zebedee* to do the like? they immediately *leave their Father, forsake their Nets, and follow him*, Mark 1. 16, 17, 18. Acts 9. 6. Acts 21. 13.

2. The phrase signifies as much as, *I will entertain him with the highest Evidences of most cordial Affection.* I have more than once noted, that the heart lies under the left breast; however, the breasts are the place of love. It were endless to enlarge upon those several Scriptures expressing the satisfaction of gracious Souls, upon the presence of Christ with them, or his returns of presence to them. One or two of them shall suffice. The first shall be that of *David*, *Psal.* 116. You will discern upon the reading of that Psalm, that God had returned to his Soul in Influences of mercy, testifying his gracious presence, he had *heard his supplication*, v. 1. *Inclined his Ear unto him*, v. 2. helped him, *v.* 6. Mark with what a satisfaction his Soul receiveth these Influences; *v.* 2. *I will call upon him as long as I live*; *v.* 7. *Return unto thy rest O my Soul*; *v.* 12. *What*

shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits; I will take the cup of Salvation, &c. v. 16. *Oh Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, and the Son of thy handmaid*, &c. How welcome is the presence of God to *Davids* Soul? Do you use to say to your friend? Sir, what shall I provide for you? I think my self much beholden to you, I am much your Servant for this kindness, rejoiced to see you, &c. Observe if *David* here speaketh not much the same language. The other instance shall be that of the Spouse, *Cant.* 3. 4. when she had recovered her beloved, *I found him whom my Soul loveth, I held him and would not let him go, untill I had brought him into my Mothers house, and into the Chamber of her that conceived me.* The Child knoweth not how to express its love to its friend better then by bringing him or her home to its Mothers, or Fathers house. What need any further evidence then that exuberance of joy which is found in every gracious Soul, upon any return of divine love which may evidence Christs abiding with it?

3. *Vehement passions* will also discover a gracious Souls desires to the Enjoyment of Christ, and his abidings with the Soul. When they saw our Saviour weep over *Lazarus* his grave, *Joh.* 11. They cry out, *How he loved him!* He that seeth a Friend mourn when his Friend is gone from him, or perhaps but going; the woman jealous of any, whom she but suspects would draw away her husband from her, falling into fits of passion when she doth but fear such a thing, will easily conclude, that this friend, this Wife is eagerly desirous of the presence and abiding of his friend, or her husband with her; and Secondly he that observes the jealousy of a gracious Soul, over the Lord its Saviour, and of every sin of Omission, or Commission which it suspecteth as that which may probably separate betwixt his Soul and it. He that observeth what slavish fear the Christian (yet living in the enjoyments of God) is often tormented with lest he should lose his beloved presence, or takes notice of his weepings even till he can weep no more when he lies but under a (perhaps) false apprehension that he hath withdrawen himself in displeasure, how his Eye oft-times consumeth with grief, how he makes his bed to swim, and watereth his Couch with tears, must needs conclude, that the abidings of Christ with the Soul are great objects of its desire. And no wonder though they be so as we shall see by enquiring upon the third question.

In.

Qu. 3. *Whence it is that a gracious Soul is so desirous of Christ's lodgings and abidings with it?*

To make a thing the object of a reasonable Soul's desire, it is required, *That the understanding conceive it under the Notion of good, and some good which it wanteth, and may possibly obtain*, and according to the degree of goodness apprehended in an object proposed, so is the motion of a reasonable Soul's desire *more or less towards it*. Now that which appears to us as good, appears so, 1. *Under the notion of profitable and advantageous*; Or, 2. *Under the notion of sweet and pleasant*, or *under the notion of vertuous and honourable*. It is almost impossible to conceive, but that the spiritually enlightened Soul should apprehend the *abidings of Christ* with it transcendently good upon all these accounts.

1. *Under the notion of Vertuous and Honourable.* What greater honour can betide a poor creature than to have the Almighty pitch his Tents in and with it? for the Lord of Heaven and Earth to make his abode with a Worm? the Eternal Son of God to dwell with Dust and Ashes, yea and delight to dwell and continue with it? Such honour have all the Saints, and no wonder if they be so fond of it. Doth *Abigail* think it an honour to be but a Servant to an Earthly *David*? and *Mephibosheth* judge it an honour to be admitted to eat Bread at his Table? What is it then to have the Son of God in the Arms of our Souls, and to have him dwell in our hearts, and make his abode there?

2. *Nor certainly can any thing be more sweet to a gracious Soul.* The joy and peace (that peace which passeth all understanding) which is the issue of believing, ebbs and flows according to the abidings of Christ with the Soul: His presence makes an Heaven, and his absence makes an Hell there. There are two Passions, which are like overflowing Floods, and drown a Soul's beauty and comfort; *Fear* and *Grief*; the presence of Christ with the Soul keeps them both under. The Soul of the Saint cannot fear, when it knows, that it is *He that saveth it, and upholdeth it with the hand of his Righteousness, and the Children of the Bride-Chamber* (himself told us) *cannot mourn while the Bridegroom is with them.*

3. For the *advantage which accrews to the Soul by the abidings of Christ with it*, besides that already mentioned, in the quiet and holy security which it hath by his company, which is infinitely above the value of all other concernments; I say, besides that, the advantage is exceeding great. I will mention but two things.

1. *Its enemies are still*, when the Captain of our Salvation is in our quarters, there's no great fear that the enemy will beat them up. The tempter hath nothing to say, whiles he that succours the tempted is speaking peace to the Soul, God must first say to the Devil, *behold this Soul is in thy hands*, before he can meddle with it. And our own inbred enemies, those of our own house (our innate lusts and Corruptions I mean) are as still as our grand Adversary: The very waters of *Marah* themselves turned sweet when this *Tree* of life is in them. Our hearts lose much of their bitterness by the presence of Christ in them, it is when the Sun is down, that the Frogs and Toads croak and the Dors and Bats fly. It is in the night when the Thief steals. The time of Christs withdrawings from the Soul is the time when *Satan* molests, and lusts are most busy.

2. *The Souls Spikenard* then sends *forth its pleasant smell.* You had it in the former verse. I shewed you there what dependence the exercise of our grace hath upon Christs presence with us, both in respect of his exciting and assisting influence. Christ speaks it plain in that excellent parable of the vine, and the branches, *Joh.* 15. 5. *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth fruit*, for *without me you can do nothing* — v. 6. *The same bringeth forth much fruit.* Otherwise the Soul *withereth*, v. 6. Naturalists say that in those Countries which abounded with Myrrh, they were wont to bind *bundles* of it to *the heart*, or to anoint it with the Gum; the use of it was to strengthen the heart against what was noxious, and unto a due discharge of its natural operations. It is *Gregories* observation, (or similitude rather) that the Soul that applies Christ to its heart, and which findeth his influence will find it like a bundle or an anointing of Myrrh strengthening the Soul against the prevailings of corruptions, and filling it with a Spiritual heat, and fitness for Heavenly operations. And thus I have shewed you just reason, why the lodgings of abidings of Christ with a gracious Soul are so desirable to it.

Obj. But will some poor Soul say? Can Christ not abide with that Soul which he hath once owned, is his love mutable, is he *not the God that changeth not*, but loveth to the end whom he once loveth?

I answer, The Love of Christ is an abiding love, he is not *yea and nay* with the Soul, upon which he hath once fixed his heart, *whom he loveth he loveth to the end.* 1. *His*

1. *His union with the Soul abideth.* Christ once in us and ever in us, is a truth to which we must adhere; that corruption which could not at first prevent it, shall never be of force to dissolve it, but the *sense of this union* may fail. The indwelling Spirit shall not be disseised, but the Spirit as a comforter may fail the Souls of the Saints. *When wilt thou comfort me?* (saith the man after Gods own heart.) Besides that our state of justification is to be maintained by the performance of our Spiritual duty, and there can be no justified Soul, that doth not earnestly desire its own continuance in that state.

2. *His necessary influences upon the Soul abide too.* The promise must stand good, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, nor can it be imagined that so noble and vertual an head as the Lord Jesus Christ can be united to any member of his Spiritual body without a proportionable influence upon it: or that the seed of God in the Soul should be wholly inactive. But Spiritual desires are also the sacred means, which God hath appointed for the preservation of these.

3. But *Gradual abidings of Christ in the Soul may fail.* He may not abide with the Soul in such proportions of Spiritual influence, at all times. Now the degrees of Spiritual influence from Christ are highly desirable to a gracious Soul. But I have spake enough to the explication and confirmation of the point. I come now to the Application.

In the first place, Let us from this *try our selves* whether we indeed be the true Spouses of *the Lord Jesus Christ, and he our beloved yea or no?* Can we say, and say it, cordially, *he shall lodge betwixt our breasts?* Use 1.

1. *There are many that say he shall sit upon my tongue,* I will talk to Christ, and take his name into my mouth, concerning whom we may say, as the Prophet sometimes said of the Jews, *The Lord was nigh in their mouths and far from their reins,* the woman dandles many a Child in her arms, that never lodgeth betwixt her bresits in the night, she talks of many a man in the day time, whom she will not allow to lodg in her bosom at night: there's many a wretch that talks of Christ that yet will not let him come nigh his heart.

2. *There are many that say they shall lodg to eternity betwixt his breasts,* that yet cannot, will not say this; going to Heaven is grown market talk, and every one is a pretender to that journeys

neys end that yet will not set one foot before another in the way. *Balaam* wisheth vainly, and many a one concludeth as vainly, that he shall dye the death of the righteous, and his latter end shall be like his; those mentioned, *Mat.* 7. 24. said they should lodge the long night of *eternity* betwixt Christs breasts, but he saith unto them, *depart from me I know you not*; there are too many that build Castles in the air, and houses upon the sand, and dream of golden mountains, but every one is not wife to another that saith she shall one day have him, nor is every Soul a Spouse to Christ that promiseth to it self eternal content in him.

3. A man may say, *Oh that Christ would come betwixt my breasts, that yet is not the Spouse of Christ.* There's scarce a wretch living but at one time or other wisheth Christ would speak to his Soul pardon and peace; 'tis one thing for a woman to desire the Physitian may make applications to her breasts, when full of pain, that yet will not say he shall lodge betwixt her breasts, you see there may be a great many mistakes in this point, but plainly let me ask you two or three questions.

1. *Are you willing to open the secrets of your Souls to Jesus Christ?* There's many a one is willing that Christ should come so near him as his Ear, but not into his heart; canst thou say that thy Soul cleaveth to the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou desirest he should enter into its secrets, not only to tip thy tongue, regulate thy Countenance, but to Command in thy heart?

2. Art thou willing that Christ should *lodge all night betwixt thy Soul?* Not serve thee only by fits to cure thy heart aking, but that he should lodge and dwell with thee; make an abode with thy Soul.

3. Art thou willing that *a perfect Christ should lodge betwixt thee?* Not only Christ as an High-Priest to expiate for thee and make an atonement for thy sins, but as a Prophet to guide & instruct thee, as a King to rule over thee, and govern thee. The Wife desires not an Husband only as her Companion, but as her head.

By this, O Christian! shalt thou know if indeed thou beest the Spouse of the Lord Jesus, and not an harlot. I might have further added. That the Soul that is so, says so of none else, can, and none *but he*, shall lodge *betwixt my breasts*. She is an harlot that speaks it in any sense less then exclusive. If thou canst truly say of the Lord Jesus Christ, *he shall lodge betwixt my breasts.*

Thou

Thou also sayest, *He shall, and none else shall*; not the sweetest lust I have, nor the loveliest piece that the World can afford me, not any thing contrary unto him, nor any thing besides him. That Earthly Object comes too nigh a Christian, that comes between its breasts. The heart is reserved for the Beloved. Deal faithfully I beseech you with your own Souls; the World is full of pretenders, but I fear me exceeding thin of such as can say, and say it in truth, and say it cordially, That Christ is he, and he alone whom they desire should lodge and stay betwixt their breasts. But enough for this Use. I hasten to conclude.

Use 2. Let us in the next place see what this Doctrine will afford us, for the promoving our comfort, or our holiness, by way of Consolation or Exhortation; and first for Consolation. The term or Verb in the Text speaketh *certainty*, but *futurity*, and the phrase denotes, 1. The Spouse's leave, 2. Desire, 3. Confidence; *He shall lodge*: And thus considered (to say nothing of the too Critical note that some make upon the term night, as signifying here a time of affliction, in which Christ is an especial comfort to the Soul; I say, to say nothing of that, because the word in the Text doth not necessarily imply a night, yet the phrase thus considered) the Text and Doctrine offer a great deal of refreshings to those apparingly forgotten Souls, who cannot obtain the *sensible abidings of Christ with them*, and are therefore ready to pronounce sadly against their Souls; that God is not with them, nor they with him: As *Gideon* said, *If the Lord be with us, why are we thus?* forgetting that God sometimes hideth himself even from the House of *Jacob*. Let such a Soul observe, That the Spouse here doth not say, *He doth lie alwaies betwixt my breasts*, though it be true that Christ doth truly and constantly dwell in the heart of his Saints, yet 'tis often indiscernably to it; but she saith, *He shall lie*, which imports, 1. *I will give him leave*; I will not drive him from my Soul; my breasts shall be free and open to him. 2. *The Spouse's desires*, it is *Vox cupientis*. 3. It speaks confidence; it is *Vox fidei*, the language of Faith, which when it speaks properly, alwaies speaks in the future tense; *for hope which is seen is no hope*, unless when it calls the things which are not in present fruition, as if they were, because of its being an *evidence of things not seen*. Look, as the true Wife is not alwaies known by having her beloved Husband in her Arms, but first, *By her readiness so to receive him*; Secondly, *By her desire of it*, as her happiness: So in the true Believer not alwaies known by his or her

sensible

sensible Enjoyments of the Lord Jesus Christ, but by the *openness of her heart* to receive him. 2. By the *longings of the Soul after him.* 3. By the *confidence of the Soul in him.*

Use 3. But lastly; Oh that the same frame of spirit might be found in you (even in every one of you who profess to have tasted how good the Lord is) which was here found in the Spouse towards the Lord Jesus Christ; that you would all say, *He shall lodge all night betwixt our breasts.* I but now told you it imported three things; 1. *Leave,* 2. *Desire,* 3. *Confidence.* 1. Lift up your heads, *O you gates, and ope you everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in.* Stand open, O my Soul, to the Lord Jesus Christ, keep your hearts free to the entertainment of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. *Make it the business of your desire and prayer.* 3. *Be confident that he will make his abode with you.* There might be three distinct branches, but I have not time to speak fully to each of them. For the two first, I have prevented my self as to the Arguments which I should use to urge them. Consider what I spake to the third Question in the Explication, how honourable a thing it is to you, how sweet and pleasant, how infinitely advantagious and profitable; there's only to be added a word of Direction: Will the poor Soul say, How should I procure the abidings of Christ with me, (I mean) his abidings as to his gradual Influences? For your direction, I will only turn you to that one Text, *Joh.* 14. 22. where you shall be resolved from our Saviour's own mouth; *If any man love me, he will keep my words, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* Christ is ready enough to stay where he finds love, but it must be *real love,* such as is joyned with *keeping of his words.* Be expressive then of your love to Christ; 1. *By voiding from your heart whatever may be offensive to his Majesty.* 2. *By heightning in your heart a great esteem of him.* 3. *By doing whatsoever he commands you.* Do you abide with him in a way of duty, and he shall abide with you in a way of mercy; according to that of the Prophet in the Book of *Chronicles* to the King; *God is with you, if you be with him;* but *if you forsake him, he will forsake you;* if you be incertain and unconstant with him, he will be so with you, as to the gradual influences of his Love; *With the froward he will shew himself froward.* 2 Chron. 15. 2.

2. I told you it is the *Language of Faith.* He shall lie. Faith is the sacred Instrument by which Christ is united to the Soul, and it is that by which Communion with Christ is maintained and preserved.

served. According to a Christian's Faith it ordinarily is unto it (as to Divine Dispensations;) Faith merits nothing of Christ, but it applieth much. Believe, and the abidings of Christ shall be established upon your Souls; but you must know, that this Faith must not be a *dead Faith*, but such as works by love. Though Faith and Holiness must not be confounded, yet (unless as to Instrumental efficacy in Justification in the act of justifying) they can never be separated. But thus much shall serve for this Verse.

Sermon LVI.

Canticles 1. 14.

My Beloved is unto me as a Cluster of Camphire in the Vineyards of Engedi.

IT is agreed on all hands, that it is the Spouse, which yet speaketh, and the term דודי which we met with from her in the former verse is enough to prove it, and to let us know that she is yet speaking concerning her *beloved*. It is also as well agreed that what she saith in this verse amounts to little more then what she had said in the 13. *v.* Only she expresseth the same thing under a *new resemblance*, but it is not so easy to *give* you a just account of her expression, and to set out the aptness of the *Metaphor* which she here used: The difficulty of which ariseth, from this that the *plant*, to which or to *the Gum of* which she here resembleth her Beloved, is an *exotick plant*, not known to us in these countries, neither in the kind, nor in the qualities, we having no perfect account given us by any of the Natures of those several plants which grew in those Eastern Countries: Which hath made that great diversity of Interpreters in translating the Heb. word כפר which we (and it is but a conjecture) translate *Camphire*; The Vulg. Lat. Sept. and *Tremellius* & the Dutch Translators translate it *Cypress*; *Castalio*, the *Cyprian Grapes*; the Arabick, *a cluster of Flowers*; *Pagnine* and

Montanus translate it not at all, but put in *Copher*; the Heb. word. The Tig. Version *Caphard, Camphire.* Let us indeavour as far as we may to find out the truth, by way of Explication of the Text, we will therefore enquire,

1. Qu. *What were those Vineyards of Engedi.* 2. *What is this Cluster of Copher or Camphire growing in these Vineyards, to which the Spouse here resembleth her beloved.* 3. *Why she resembleth him in this manner,* to a *Cluster of Copher,* in the *Vineyards of Engedi.*

1. Qu *What were these Vineyards of Engedi?*

The name *Engedi* signifieth *Oculus hœdi,* a kids Eye. It was a City, the same with *Hazazon Tamar,* 2 *Chron.* 20. 2. Now *Hazazon Tamar* was a City of the *Amorites, Gen.* 14. 7. called by them *Hazazon Tamar,* taken in by *Joshuah,* in the conquest of *Canaan,* and by him set out to the tribe of *Judah,* for a part of their portion, *Jos.* 15. 62. From which place you may observe, it was *a City,* and in or near the Wilderness, it was a place at or near which were *strong holds, David* fled thither from *Saul,* 1 *Sam.* 23. 29. & 1. 24. where you read of the *wilderness* and of the *strong holds of Engedi.* But of the Vineyards at *Engedi,* you read no where else in holy Writ. Some tell us that the *Queen of Sheba* brought with her out of her Country, some choice and odoriferous Plants, which *Solomon* planted here, and that they thrave exceedingly. *Hazazon Tamar* signifies a City of *Palms,* and speaks it anciently famous for *rare plants,* for it was called by that name in *Abrahams* time. *Nierembergius* tells us, it was a place of old famous for a multitude of sweet smelling plants, especially *Balsams* which it brought forth in great plenty. Which *balsams* say he and others, were certain *shrubby plants,* which if an incision were made into them with a sharp stone, or a knife of bone, or Glass, a sweet smelling juice dropped from them, and they say that *Engedi* continued such a place, till *Herods time,* when *Cleopatra,* transplanted them into *Egypt,* they say there are still in *Engaddi* some remainders of those plants, but of no value. But they say there is yet in *Egypt* a great Garden full of them, betwixt *Heliopolis and Babylon,* which *Saliguiacus* saith he saw, and many strange stories he and others tell of Christ when he was in *Egypt,* being washed in a fountain nigh this Garden, *&c.* But they are Apocryphal, and I shall not trouble you with them. But,

תמר *Sonat palmam. Mercer.* in Gen. 14. *Nieremb. de Mirac. Naturæ terræ promissæ, cap.* 12.

Qu. 2.

Qu. 2. What is meant here by אשכל הכפר which we translate a *Cluster of Camphire*. We translate it *Camphire*. It is no easy thing to give a just account of it. The word in the Heb. according to R. *Mordecay Nathan* hath 7 distinct significations. I shall not need insist upon them all, but one or two of them are possibly applicable here, for those significations of the word where it signifies *the frost, or the dew* כפור as *Exod.* 16. 13. A *standing cup, or a flesh hook*, as in. 1 *Paral.* 18. v. 17. A *Village*, as in 1 Sam. 6. 19. *A young Lion* as in *Judg.* 14. 5. It is not in this Text capable of any of these senses, by reason of what goes before אשכל a *Cluster, or branch, &c.* But besides these, there are 3 other significations: You read the word *Gen.* 6. 16. Thou shalt pitch it over with *pitch*. The Heb. is בכפר with Copher. I think *Avenarius* his conjecture is good, who thinks it hath obtained this Signification from its likeness to *Gopher* which signifies a Pine tree from whence came pitch, with which the Ark was covered; from this Original signification of the word according to which it signifies a *Covering*, it hath obtained another; it signified, the *Mercy seat*, *Exod.* 25. 17. & 37. 6. Either because the Mercy seat was covered with the *Cherubims*, or it self *was a kind of covering* to the *Ark* being over it. And hence this word also signifies an *expiation of sin*, and is translated *Redemption*, *Psal.* 49. 8. God in pardoning sin provides a covering for it, *Psal.* 32. 1. *Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* And I find expositors that think there is in this Text, a great respect had to that signification of the word. But what ever allusion the Spouse may be thought to make to that signification, certain it is, that she here understands by it a plant which the Jews knew by that name. But now what Plant that was is very hard to determine. I hinted to you before the various senses of Interpreters; some translate it *Cypress*, some *Camphire*, some *Cyparis*, some the *Cyprian Grapes*: Others at a pure loss retain the Heb. word *Copher*. There are three more eminent opinions.

1. Some think the sense this, *As a Cluster of Cyprian Grapes is my Beloved to me.* Thus *Castalio*, and some others, who have observed out of *Plin.* that the *Cyprian Grapes* were famous for sweetness. But they did not duly consider the distance between the *Isle of Cyprus*. And *Engaddi* (a City in *Juda*)

Festus in *Heb. Dict.* reckons six significations, 1 Pitch. Gen. 6. 16. 2 A Village, 1 Sam. 6. 19. 3 A price set upon anothers life for his Redemption, Exod. 21. 30. 30. 12. Num. 35. 31. 4 Any gift given to appease a Judg. 15 m 12. 3. 5 An Expiation, Prov. 6, &c. 6 The name of a Tree bearing Clusters, which the Latines call *Cyprus*. V. part, *ibid.* So also Cant. 4. 13.

as *Mercer* well observes, therefore although the Vineyards of *Engaddi* be mentioned, yet כפר was no Vine as some think, but some other plant which grew with the Vines (as was usual.)

2. Others think that it is that which we call *Privet*. The Latines *Ligustrum*. The Gr. κιγκλίδα. Which in those Countries was of a better Kind then ours, and *Pliny* tells us, bare a White Flower, with a kind of Seed in Clusters like Grapes, and that of this Plant the *Unguentum Cyprinum* was made which had a rare smell.

Alba ligustra cadunt, &c. Virgil.

3. Others again think that *Cypress is meant, as a Cluster of Cypress is my well Beloved unto me.* Now this *Cypress* they tell us was a plant, which flowed with a sweet Gum. It was a rare sweet smelling Balsam and the Best of it grew in the Vineyards of *Engaddi*.

You see how much Interpreters are in their sense divided, concerning the nature of this Plant from which the Metaphor of the Text is drawn. And no wonder then if it be hard to determine the third thing, *viz. why the Spouse here compareth her Beloved to a Cluster of Copher.*

See a story about this Plant in *Forster. Heb Dict. in verbo* כפר

Yet in that I find them most reasonably well agreed; That whatever Plant it was, either the Herb of it, or the Juice of it was exceeding sweet, and the Spouse here compareth Christ to it, to denote that exceeding and abundant sweetness which her Soul had tasted in him. And so this Text speaketh but the same in another phrase, which she had said before. *A bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me*; she means the same thing when she here saith, *A cluster of Camphire or Copher is my Beloved to me*, that is, *exceeding sweet and precious.* When I spake to the other expression, I spake so fully to that point, of the infinite Sweetness that is in Christ, that I have nothing to add upon that Subject; only I remember that I then took notice, that I did not judge the term ל redundant, but *exclusive*; My Beloved is not sweet to others, they smell no Sweetness in him, but to *Me* he is a *cluster of Camphire*, as a *bundle of Myrrh*, sweet, infinitely sweet, above all other sweet things most sweet. The Proposition which I shall only insist upon is this;

Prop. *That the true believing Soul sees peculiar Excellencies, and tasts a peculiar Sweetness in Christ which others do not see nor tast.* This Doctrine supposeth,

1. That

1. That there is such an overflowing Fountain of goodness and sweetness in Jesus Christ, that even those who are not Believers may discern some sweetness and excellency in him. 2. It asserts,

That there is a peculiar excellency and sweetness in him discernable to the Believer, which others do not discern. The former is a truth. As a good woman may so far approve her self to all that see her, or hear of her, that they may in heart admire her, and praise her, and have a general love for her; but yet this woman may to her Husband, in respect of her peculiar suitableness to him, and more immediate and intimate converse with him, be ten thousand times more precious in his Eyes, than unto others: So it is with the Lord Jesus Christ; a wicked man, who is far enough from saving Faith, or any special Interest in Christ, may yet have a general love for him. Give me leave a little to enlarge upon this supposed part of the Proposition. 1. *By enquiring* upon what bottom this general love can stand. 2. *By making some Inferences from it.* The grounds of it may be, 1. *Real*, or 2. *Supposed and mistaken.* The truth is, such is the Lord Jesus Christ, such a Fountain of sweetness, that there is real ground for all the Sons of men to love him. I will hint you two or three.

1. The first shall be, *his humbling himself for the good of mankind.* The Evangelist saith, *Joh.* 3. 16. That *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*, &c. *Arminians* cannot understand what the greatest part in the World (as to the matter of Redemption) have to thank God for, if Christ were not given with equal respect to one as to another, or at least (as others qualifie) to purchase a possibility for all: But certainly if one should say, such a one so loved such a Family, that he gave his whole Estate to a *Child* of it, we might understand it, though every Member of the Family neither had, nor were in possibility to have part, and part like. It is very questionable whether the *Angels* ever shared in the death of Christ any way; yet I believe they love Christ for his dying for men: And to that end, *Eph.* 3. 10. the manifold Wisdom of God is by the Church made known to them. *Beneficence*, or *doing good to others*, especially such as are in misery, is a thing so commends it self to the reason of man, that we cannot but have a love for such as are bountiful, though we never tast of their bounty. We see it in ordinary experience, if we that live here (be rational and ingenuous) hear that one who lives in the furthest parts of *England* hath given all his Estate to good uses, though we have no share in them,

them, yet we love the man for it. And certainly, if you could suppose a reasonable creature, who should but hear that Christ, the Eternal Son of God, came down from Heaven, and died upon the Cross, for some men, though he knew he were none of them, yet it would be a ground of love to him considered as a reasonable creature.

2 Reason. But secondly, a ground of it may be, *The certain apprehension of some good which even the Unbeliever enjoyeth from Christ.* It is said by many, and those too such as can by no means agree, that Christ died equally for all, or that he purchased a possibility of Salvation for all; that yet there is none who lives, but is for his life and preservation beholden to the death of Christ; and that all receive this good from him, which may to rational men evidence a ground of Love. I must confess I cannot too boldly strike this string, for I much doubt whether the standing of the World, and the common preservation of men, flows from the Death of Christ as the Issue of his purchase; I should rather ascribe it to the gracious Providence of God, of which even the Death of Christ also is an Issue.

3. Certain it is, that whatever the intention of Christ in dying was, such is the Wisdom of Divine Providence, *That the Gospel is held forth indefinitely; Whosoever believeth shall be saved.* So that there is no ground for any Soul to conclude, I was none of those considered in the purchase of Christ, and there is ground sufficient in the intrinsecal value and sufficiency of the Death of Christ, considered together with the indefinite Proposal of the Covenant of Grace, to encourage every man under hope of finding mercy with him, to come unto him. Now, which is there of us, that should hear of a liberal man worth many thousands of pounds, that should have freely determined with himself to spend it all upon our Family, and should make a general offer to us, that to so many of us as would come to him, he would give a share sufficient, would not (as a reasonable creature) judge himself engaged to love him, even before we should so go to him and receive our share? Give me leave only to infer two things from this Discourse.

Corol. 1. *That there is sufficient ground for God to condemn those for want of love to Christ, who yet never had a saving sight of him.*? All men deserve to be *Anathema Maranatha*, whose hearts yern not toward Christ, whether ever they had any saving experience of the Love of Christ to their Souls, or no. I speak but as a reasonable creature. If I were sure that I were shut out of Christ's thoughts when he died

died upon the cross, and that he would never save my Soul: yet I see reason enough why I ought to hate my self, and condemn my self if I should not love him: I remember what the Jews said for their Centurion: *He hath loved our Nation and built us a Synagogue*; this I am sure of, Christ hath loved mankind, he hath purchased salvation for some of them. O my Soul (if thou beest forgotten of God) yet love him, who would so far humble himself as to pity dust and ashes.

2. Hence secondly, No wonder *if there be some love to Christ appearing in those who have no share nor interest in him.* It hath been the assertion of some, that Common grace and special grace differ not *specifically* but *gradually*. I think the assertion, amongst understanding men but a contest of Logical terms; I no way doubt of the truth of this, *That an unbeliever may love Christ in a sense*: *But* the Love of the Child of God vastly differs, being an *infused habit* and of another *species*. Whatsoever is presented to us under the Notion of good, whether so really or apparently, is plainly the proper object of our love: Now such may Christ appear even to an unbeliever, who is far from having tasted how good the Lord is; hence even in a carnal man there may be *desires after Christ*, good wishes to the interest of Christ upon the Earth, yea and he may do much for the Service of Christ; either from a general Notion of Christs excellency, or 2dly (which I should have mentioned before) *from a supposal that he hath as good a share, and interest in Christ, as any other*, though in this (possibly) he may be mistaken. And this is very useful for us to consider, that we may not build too great confidences, from such desires, which we find in our Souls, or any such external actions, without a due inquiry after their Principle. But enough of this, I come to the positive part of the Proposition. Corol. 2.

2. *That there is a peculiar excellency in Christ, which the believing Soul sees and savours, and is not discernable to others.* My beloved (saith the Spouse) is *a Cluster of Camphire unto me*. They said to her in 5th of this Song, *v.* 9. *What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest amongst women? what is thy beloved more then anothers beloved that thou so strictly chargest us?* She answers, *v.* 10. My *beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand*, &c. For the opening of this, I will propound two questions, Cant. 5. 9.

1. *What*

1. *What are those peculiar excellencies, which the believer sees in Christ, more then another sees.*

2. *How comes the believing Soul to be more eagle eyed then his neighbour.*

To the first

1. *The believer sees further into the heighths, and depths of redeeming love* (in the general) then *another man doth.* The heighth of redeeming love is too great for a reasonable man to take, the Astronomer is lost at taking the heighth of this Star, we must *be strengthned with might by the Spirit in the inward man,* Eph.3.16,17. *Christ* must dwell *in our hearts by faith,* and we must be *rooted, and grounded in love,* before we shall *be able with all Saints to comprehend, what is the breadth, length, and depth, and heigth, and know the Love of Christ which passeth knowledge.* The unbeliever living under the light of the Gospel is like the blind man, whose Eyes Christ hath once touched, and he seeth something of the excellency of Christ, but alas! he *seeth men like trees;* Christ *must touch him again* before *he sees things clearly*; the believer seeth Christ as another thing to what the unbeliever seeth.

2. The believer discerns a *particular respect of Christ, to his Soul.* Ah this, this is it which makes Christ as a *Cluster of Camphire,* it is sweet to a rational Soul, to see a *Saviour*: But infinitly sweet for it to see him, as *its Saviour,* to cry out, my Lord, my God: Propriety in a good sweetens it infinitly unto a Soul, the believer sees Christ as his Christ, *his Saviour.* It is sweet to poor Creatures, who are so far enlightened, as to see the World lyeth in darkness, to know that *he is the true light enlightning all that come into the World*; but infinitly more sweet to the Soul, when it sees that he hath enlightened it in particular. A good woman (to a reasonable man) is pretious and he loves her *quatenus* good, and vertuous, but if she becomes his Wife, that strangely indears her to him, and shews her a peculiar excellency in him. 'Tis sweet to a reasonable man, that is enlightened to see that all the Sons of *Adam* are by nature under misery, to see that Christ came *to Redeem them from this misery and Curse*; but how sweet must it be for this Soul to apprehend, that he hath redeemed it in particular from this misery? I shall not need to enlarge further upon this which is so plain. Doth any ask,

Qv. 2.

Qu. 2. *Whence it is that the believing Soul seeth such a peculiar sweetness and excellency in Christ.*

Answer. 1. *From that special illumination which attends regeneration.* There is a Common illumination and there is a special illumination; the Common illumination is the work of Gods Spirit concurring with the Preaching of the Gospel, inabling men to understand, and give some general assent to what is there revealed: but when the Lord comes to deal savingly with the Soul, it opens the Eyes of the Soul, to a fuller, clearer and more certain sight of Gospel mysteries, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. *God revealeth to his Saints by his Spirit, those things, which the Princes of the World* (though they heard the Gospel) *never knew, what things Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart to conceive.* A Commonly enlightned Soul, upon the Preaching of the Gospel, may see the same things that a believer sees, that Christ died, *&c.* But it sees them not so fully and clearly, as upon special saving illuminations, when the Spirit dealeth with the Soul, as it were by demonstration, and gives it to see a Christ crucified as it were before its Eyes. There are two things especially, which the Soul (upon conversion) doth doubtless see after a quite other manner then it saw them before conversion. 1. *The sinfulness and mischief of sin.* A man meerly reasonable may see the uglines, and sinfulness of some sins, (such as are contrary to the light of nature, *&c.*) A man Commonly enlightned may see more of the sinfulness, and danger, both of these and of other sins: but when the Spirit of God cometh savingly to work in the Soul, it seeth the sinfulness, and danger even of these sins, after another manner; sin then becomes exceeding sinful, *Rom.* 7. 13. It then thinks it sees Hell fire before it, and is dropping into it, and so hath a clearer sight of the danger of it. 2. The *excellency of Christ*, is doubtless seen by it too after another manner. Of this there needs no greater evidence than the Souls strange workings of affections towards him, its groanings after him, longings for an interest in him, *&c.*

2. *This proceeds also from the Souls union to Christ, and experiences of him.* There are three waies by which the mind of man is united to its object, every one of which makes it more sweet, then when it meerly contemplates it, and hath it in speculation: one or all of which waies every believer is united to Christ.

1. *The first is by hope.* Suppose a man, hath in his Eye a beautiful, and vertuous Woman: there's such a proportion to his reasonable nature, in her goodness and vertue, that she is pretious to him, and he puts a value upon her, though he never hopes to make her his Wife, but if he hath any such grounded hope she is much more precious to him: there's no gracious Soul, but is at least thus far united to Christ, not only beholding him as an excelling object, but possessed of a *good hope through grace* that this Christ is his Christ; now this must make him more sweet then to another, who hath no such hope.

2. But secondly: Suppose this man *hath some assurance*, that this vertuous Woman shall be his Wife, though it may be as yet they be only man and Wife before God, yet this union makes her more sweet and precious to him: now this is the portion of many of Gods Children, they can say, *my Beloved is mine and I am his*; I am sure the death of Christ is mine, the grace of Christ is mine, and the glory of Christ shall be mine, I shall see my Redeemer with these Eyes (as *Job* said) how much more sweet, must this assurance make Christ to his Soul, then to anothers, that can only say, there is a Saviour given to the World, but whether for my Soul, or no, I cannot tell.

3. Lastly (to keep my similitude still) Suppose now the man that hath taken notice of a good and vertuous Woman in the World and hath formerly had hopes, to obtain her for his Wife, and promises, hath at last come to the enjoyment of her, and to experience the fruit of her vertues, in her good conversation with him, you will certainly say that to this man, this Woman is more sweet then to all the World besides, this is the case of every believing Soul. It hath had some experiences or other of the warmings, quickenings, strengthenings, comfortings of his grace, and hence it is that Christ to *this Soul*, I say to this Soul more then to another, is a *bundle of Myrrh*, and a Cluster of *Copher*. But I have insisted too long upon a truth, so far experienced by every gracious Soul.

Use 1. By way of application. No wonder then, *to see the excessive Triumphs of a gracious Soul* for a *present Christ*, or the *exorbitant passions of it for an absent Christ*. Or its *excessive fondness of what may conduce to its further enjoyments of him*: these three things the silly World stands and wonders at.

1. The excessive Triumphs of a Soul for *a present Christ*,

to

to hear a *David* call *come and I will tell you what God hath done for my Soul*: Or a Spouse cry out, *I will hold him, I will not let him go, he shall lye all night betwixt my breasts: I charge you O you daughters of* Hierusalem, *that you stir not up nor awake my love untill he please: Oh that thou wert as my Brother who sucked the breasts of my Mother, when I should find thee without I would kiss thee*, &c. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers house, when I should find thee, without I would kiss thee*, &c. Cant. 8.1,2. *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my Mothers house*, &c. *I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine*, &c. The World wonders to see a broken spirited *Hannah* rise up from Prayer, and her Countenance be no more sad: but 'tis no wonder. As a Cluster of *Copher is Christ to the Soul*, Christ by his influence puts more gladness into a gracious Soul, then the increase of corn, wine, and oil creates in a Worldlings heart, 'tis no more to be wondred at, then the drunkards shouting for new wine, or the Farmers joy in harvest.

2. The World wonders *too at the exorbitant passions of a gracious heart for an absent Christ*; to see a gracious Soul weeping and refusing to be comforted, alas her beloved hath withdrawn himself, and she knows not whither he is gone, and as a *Cluster of Copher* her beloved is to her, nothing so sweet, so precious as Christ is, pardon her trouble, she cannot help it.

3. Nor lastly, is she more to be wondred at for *her fondness of any Ordinance where she thinks she may meet her beloved, or injoy ought of his presence, or obtain further influences of grace from him.* Wonder not then my friends to see believers going from Ordinance to Ordinance, from duty to duty, 'tis Christ they seek in every Ordinance, in every duty: and as a Cluster of Copher in the Vineyards of *Engedi*, so is their beloved unto them.

2. *Let this engage you, then to prove your selves Christians indeed by exceeding others in duty to Christ.* By this you shall know if you be the Spouses of Christ, if you discern more of the excellency, and sweetness of Christ then others do, and if you do, it will be evident by your further motions towards him, and actings for him: what our Saviour therefore said to his disciples give me leave to say to you Τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε, What do you more for him then others. I will conclude this Use 2

discourse by offering you two questions to inquire upon in secret.

1. *Qu. What more frequent, and precious thoughts hast thou of Christ then others?* supposing the Lord Jesus Christ, *a bundle of Myrrh* or a *Cluster of Camphire.* The art of *smelling* lies much in *meditation*, and by how much the more sweet Christ is to thy Soul, by so much the oftner wilt thou be smelling his sweetness: How are thy leisurable thoughts busied, I remember what *David* said, *When I am awake I am with thee*, Canst thou say, Lord when my thoughts are at leisure from my Worldly disturbances, they are with thee: when I am awake in the night I am with thee, when the sinner is thinking how to dishonor thee, and to defile himself, I am thinking, Ah! what shall I render unto thee? This is an excellent sign. Thou hast a truth of grace, *where the treasure is, there the heart will be.* Hearken to *David*, *Psal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him shall be sweet.* See *Psal.* 119. 97, 99. Canst thou say, Lord I *remember thee in the night season*, &c. Will some poor Soul say, I *do remember God and Christ, but I cannot say 'tis sweet to me to meditate on him*, Psal. 77. *I remember God and am troubled? Sol.* Judge not thy self from this, if the act of mediration be sweet to thy Soul (it is well with thee) although the fruit be bitter. The Woman, shews her self her Husbands Wife, as well by the passions which her meditations of him cause in her, when he is absent: as in the pleasure she hath by the thoughts of him when he is present.

Qu. 2. *What diligence doest thou use to preserve the sweet savour of Christ unto and upon thy Soul.* Christ considered in himself, is not like a flower that may lose its *scent and sweetness*; no, he cannot lose that sweetness which is essential to him, he would cease to be Christ, if he could cease to be sweet, to a lost and and undone Soul, but although he retains his sweetness, yet thou mayest lose thy savour of it. He may not be *sweet to thee.* There are two sorts of Souls who savour very little of Christs sweetness. 1. *The Soul that lies under guilt of sin*; the thoughts of Christ to that Soul are ordinarily very terrible. 2. *The Soul that is choaked with Worldly Incumbrances.* The freer the Soul can keep it self, from distracting cares for the World, or from the renewing guilt of sin, the sweeter will the thoughts of Christ be unto it. Now if Christ be as a

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Cluſter of Copher to the Soul. It will be very careful to preſerve the ſweet ſavour that it hath of him. And by this thou ſhalt know if Chriſt be indeed to thee, as a *Bundle of Myrrh*, or a *Cluſter of Copher*. But thus much ſhall ſerve to have ſpoken to this verſe.

Sermon LVII.

Cant. 1. 15.

Behold thou art fair, Behold thou art fair, thou haſt Doves Eyes.

THere is a great harmony of Interpreters in the verſion of the words of this Text, out of the Heb. into their ſeveral Languages, excepting only that what we (according to our dialect) tranſlate *My Love*, they tranſlate ſometimes, *My Neighbour*, or *My Kinſwoman*, or *My Companion* (for which you alſo perceive our Margents give an allowance, and that ſome tranſlate a Dove, ſome Doves Eyes, and the *Arabick* differing from all, *thy Eyes are as a pair of Doves*. There is no other difference. And this is ſo inconſiderable, that I ſhall ſpend no time in indeavouring to reconcile it.

All Interpreters agree, that it is the *Bridegroom which now ſpeaketh*. He who acteth that part I mean in this Song. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Perſon he ſpeaketh to and of is the believing Soul which he calls רעיתי *My beloved*, or My Campanion, *&c.* It is of the *Fœminine form in the Hebrew*, which is that which leads Interpreters to conclude, that it is the *Spouſes ſpeech*. It is a word often uſed in this form in this Song, and I think no where elſe ſo in all the Scripture. In the ſentence you have conſiderable, 1. *The matter of it* in two Propoſitions, *Thou art fair, thou haſt Doves Eyes*. 2. *The manner of expreſſing it*; 1. The words are doubled. *Thou art fair, Thou art fair*. 2. Here is a double *Ecce* Prefixed. *Behold! Behold!* There are in the Text 2. Propoſitions, 1. *The Spouſe of Chriſt is fair*, 2. *The Spouſe of Chriſt hath Doves Eyes*.

1. Prop.

1. Prop. *The Spouse of the Lord Jesus Christ is fair.*

The believing Soul is a beautiful Soul; to the main of this Proposition, I have very lately spoken, when I spake to the compellation, *v.* 8. where Christ had called her *the fairest among Women.* I then discoursed the Nature of her *beauty*, and shewed you, 1. That it was not a corporeal but *a Spiritual beauty*, 2. Not *a visible but an invisible beauty*, 3. *Not a Native but an adventitious beauty*, 4. Not *an artificial, but a created beauty*, 5. Not *an adherent beauty only but an inherent beauty also*, 6. *A desirable beauty*, 7. *A durable beauty*, 8. *Not a perfect beauty.* And having spoken so fully to it there (where also the same word is used) I intend not to repeat it here, only I shall take notice of some circumstances, by which the Proposition is advantaged in this Text. And

They are four or five, 1. *He had told her before*, She was the *fairest amongst Women.* Not satisfied with that he repeateth his Love to her again, and telleth her she is fair, she is fair.

2. The Soul had been commending Christ, that he was as a *bundle of Myrrh, as a Cluster of Camphire* to her; Christ upon her expressing affection to him replies, *Behold thou art fair, &c.*

3. When he calls her *Fair* he adds, *My Love; Thou art fair my Love.*

4. It is not barely expresst, *Thou art fair*, but here is an *Ecce* prefixed; *Behold* thou art fair.

5. Lastly, He doth not speak it *singly*; But he doubles his words; *Thou art fair, Thou art fair*, and the term *Behold*, is repeated too, *Behold! thou art fair; Behold! Thou art fair.*

Here is none of these five circumstances, but will afford us a meditation, which will be either informative, or sweet, or profitable to us. Give me leave therefore to speak a word to each of them.

1. Circum. He had told the Spouse before, she was היפה בנשים the *fairest amongst Women.* But not Satisfied with that he tells her again, *Thou art fair* my Love, *Thou art fair.* Christ doth not only speak *peace*, but he repeats *peace* to the believers Soul. God often appears to *Abraham*, and *Jacob* to assure them that he was their God. *Once have I spoken, and twice have I heard*

Obs.

it,

it, (saith the Psalmist) *that Power belongs unto God.* There is many a Soul that can say, Once hath God spoken, yea twice have I heard it, that the *Love of God belongs to me.* There is many a Christian that can say, In such an Ordinance I heard God speaking peace, at such a time I found this *Spirit witnessing with my Spirit* that I was his Child. Christ in this consulteth, 1. His *Peoples infirmities*; 2. *His own glory.*

1. Christ I say in this thing consulteth, 1. *His Peoples infirmities.* They are many which make them need this; two chiefly.

1. *The Believers Soul is dull of hearing.* The Apostle chargeth the Hebrews, *Heb.* 5. 11. That they were *dull* of *hearing*, which made the repeating fundamental truths necessary for them —— There's nothing in the World, that a gracious heart would more gladly hear then this, *that it is fair in the Eyes of Jesus Christ*, and yet nothing that it is more dull to hear: the reason is because *it so eagerly desires it*, and prizeth it so highly, that it cries out, *It is too good news to be true.* You shall observe in the World a double disposition in men: some are disposed almost wholly to fear, others to over much confidence. Hence at such a time of changes in the state as this is, one man (be a thing never so true, and to his mind, yet) he hardly believes, he is naturally disposed to fear the worst. Other men, let things be never so improbable yet they will hope, and talk as confidently as if the thing they would have were done. It is much from their natural temper, they are disposed to confidence, *&c.* Take now an unbelieving natural man, and he is disposed to bless himself and hope well of his condition, you have his copy, *Deut.* 29. 19, 20. *He saith, I shall have peace, though I walk according to the imagination of my heart*, &c. But now take a believing Soul, and he is *very dull of hearing words of peace.* Tell him news of the wrath of God revealing against the Children of disobedience he easily believes it, and tells you he feels it in his Conscience, he is one of them designed to this wrath. The terrors of God have been upon his Soul and (like an affrighted man) he is very prone to shake, at any representation of what he hath found so terrible to him. But let a Minister of Christ tell him, *thy iniquities are pardoned*, Christ is at the door of thy Soul, it is Such improbable news to his affrighted Soul, such a strange thing, that he should be pardoned, and such

such a sinner received to mercy, that he is like the Christians met, *Acts* 12. to pray for *Peter*, when the Maid brought in word that *Peter* was at the gate, they say unto her, *thou art mad*: And when she stands to her word, they will believe no more then *that it was his Angel.*

A gracious Soul especially when it comes first to believe, is ready to say to it self, Surely I *am mad* to think that Christ should account me fair, pardon my sins, *&c.* Now Christ in repeating peace, consulteth this infirmity in us: as I remember he did with *Manoah*, *Jud.* 12. *Manoah's Wife* had been barren, God sends an Angel to her to tell her she should conceive a Son, *&c. v.* 6, 7. *Manoah's* Wife tells her Husband (you must think there was nothing in the World these two desired more then a Son.) But it seemed too good news to be true and therefore, *v.* 6. *Manoah*, goes and Prays, *O Lord let the man of God which thou didst send to us come again to us*, indeed the reason of his desire which he assigns is to direct him how to *order his Son*: but certainly *Manoah* thought the news too good to be true: and God so far yeilds to *Manoah's infirmity*, as to send his Angel the second time,

Judg. 12.3.

2. As the believing Soul is *dull of hearing Christ at first speaking peace to* it, and is like to *Samuel* when *Eli* called, and cannot apprehend Gods voice: So it is *also very prone to forget the words of peace which God speaketh to it.* Of all the joys which we are in this life capable of, these are the greatest, and none so soon lost as these are, so incertain is the state of the Children of God. *In many things we offend*, and even *the righteous man sinneth seven times in a day*, and who can tell how often he offendeth? Now every sin in its own nature is a breach of our peace with God, and gives the watchful Soul occasion of doubting, whether it did not at first mistake the voice of God, or whether God hath not changed his mind towards it: and hence in the second place God highly consults our infirmities, in doubling his *words of peace* upon us and repeating them unto us. Christ had told *Peter*, *Thou art* Peter, *and upon this rock will I build my Church*, but when *Peter* had denied his Master Christ easily foreseeing, that *Peters* thoughts would be much troubled, and that he would be ready to forget all his former evidences of his favour: orders his Angel, *Mar.* 16. 7. To bid the woman *go tell his disciples and* Peter, *that he went before them into Galilee, and there they should see him.*

1 Sam. 3. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Mark 16. 7.

2. But

But ſecondly; As the Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth by it conſult his Peoples infirmity, ſo *he alſo highly conſulteth his own Glory.* Reiterations of Divine Love to the Soul, command reduplications of duty. Love is of an obliging nature, and there is no Soul that puts on ſo lively for God, as that Soul that hath the moſt freſh and frequent manifeſtations of Divine Love to it. *David's* Inſtance in the 118 *Pſalm*, is a full Evidence of this. And this is the account that may be given why it pleaſeth the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to repeat his Love ſo frequently unto the Souls of Believers.

Obj. But I hear ſome gracious Souls ſaying, *Bleſſed are they that are in ſuch a caſe*, who hear God ſpeaking Love to their Souls, and often repeating his Love to them: But alas! we are ſo far from this, that we could never yet hear Chriſt ſpeaking any ſuch thing to our Souls; we could never yet hear Chriſt ſo much asonce ſaying, *Behold thou art fair my Love*, &c. What will you ſay to us? Shall we hope that we are the Spouſes of Chriſt, who never yet could obtain one good look from him? I anſwer;

Sol. 1. As it is not the Husband's fond and affectionate expreſſions to his Wife, which make, or alone evidence her to be his Wife, but *the Marriage-covenant is that which doth it*; her conſent to have him to be her wedded Husband, and his conſent to have her to be his Wife; So it is not a *word of peace*, ſealed to the Soul which maketh the Soul, or which alone evidenceth the Soul to be the Spouſe of Chriſt; No, it is the Marriage-covenant, it is the Soul's conſent to have Chriſt for its Saviour, for its Husband. Though Chriſt hath not ſaid it in thy hearing, *Thou art fair my Love, thou art fair*, yet if the Soul can ſay, and ſay it in truth, that it hath accepted Chriſt as its Saviour, and conſented to Chriſt as its Husband, there's no cauſe of deſpondency, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. *We walk by faith, not by ſight.*

2. *Though the Lord be pleaſed thus to ſpeak his Love in the hearing of ſome Souls, and again to repeat it to them*; yet he is pleaſed to *reſerve himſelf more from ſome who are equally dear to him.* It may be the indulgent Father loves every Child he hath with a dear and tender love, and doth deſign to give them all due proportions of his Eſtate, yet he may carry himſelf *more ſtrangely* and reſervedly to ſome than unto others: Poſſibly he may do it out of *prudence*, as knowing it the beſt way in order to their good: Poſſibly no other account can be given of it, than a meer *ἰδιωτία*, a meer delight that he takes in one more than another, which he exerciſeth by Prerogative: It may be God out of a depth of Wiſdom ſhines not upon

thy Soul so clearly as upon another's? Possibly no other account can be given of it, but because he will do it.

3. *Take heed thy loose walking with God be not the cause of it.* When ever Christ speaks to the Soul, he will speak truth, if thou beest all foul, and spotted, he will not say to thee, *behold thou art fair my Love, behold thou art fair.* The Soul may have many failings, many spots upon its face, and yet be *fair* in the Eyes of Christ, fair as to its Justification: But Christ will not say to such a Soul, *Behold thou art fair.* The Father or prudent Mother, may dearly love a disingenuous and rebellious Child. But their prudence will keep them from commending such a Child, and from expressing exuberant affection to it, lest the Child by it take advantage to go on in courses of disobedience. Christ dearly loves many a poor Soul that hath its wanton tricks, and is full of failings, but he will not say to such a Soul, *Behold thou art fair my Love.* I will add but one thing more.

4. Lastly; Possibly Christ hath spoke, and spoke it to thee often, *Behold thou art fair my Love, Behold thou art fair, but thou hast not heard him.* I have already told you that many of God's People are very *deaf of that Ear.* I was about to say, there is no better sign of a gracious Soul, than not to be too ready to hear such messages of peace. God sometimes speaks so as the Soul cannot but hear, when he pleaseth to set the *Broad Seal* of his Spirit unto the poor Soul; this indeed is an audible voice, and distinguishable enough. But God in every Sermon speaks to the Believer, *Thou art fair my Love, thou art fair.* We never Preach those great Truths of God, *That whosoever believes shall be saved, and whosoever is justified by Faith, hath peace with God,* and such like; but God to every Believer that hears us speak, *Thou art fair my Love, thou art fair.* But alas! not one of many hath an Ear to hear, no not those who truly believe. It is in this case as with *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 4, 5. *Samuel* was young, and had not been used to the voice of God; God calls him once, away he goes to *Eli*; the Lord calls a second time, *Samuel* runs to *Eli* again, and so a third time, till *Eli* instructed and assured him it was the voice of God. Till the Spirit of God brings the voice of God in the Gospel to the Ear, to the inward Ear of a Christian, he will not understand God speaking peace to him, when indeed he doth speak it. In very deed it is for want of Spiritual Logick. The Word of God hath the Proposition; He that believes is fair; *Though a man hath been a Thief, a Drunkard, a Co-*

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vetous person, &c. yet, if he be washed, if he be justified, if he be sanctified in the Name of our God, and through the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is fair. Thus much is plain in the Word, 1 Cor. 6. 11. But now when the Soul should come to assume, —*But I am washed, I am justified, I am sanctified*; there it fails; and these may be the Reasons of a gracious Soul's complaint in this case. But I have spoke enough to the first of the five Circumstances which I mentioned, I proceed now to a second.

The Spouse had been admiring Christ, comparing him *to a bundle of Myrrh, to a cluster of Camphire, or Copher.* Now Christ adds, Behold thou *art fair my Love*; Behold *thou art fair.* 2 Circumst.

Obs. *High out-goings of a Soul toward Christ, are ordinarily productive of great returns of the Love of Christ upon the Soul.*

Duty in us is not the Father of Grace, for who hath given first unto God, and it shall be repaid to him again? but extraordinary influences of Grace, are commonly the wages of great duty. It is very seldom that any Soul lets Christ know that he is exceeding dear to it, but (by the next Post) the Soul shall know that it is very dear to Christ. Doth God hear *Ephraim* bemoaning himself thus? *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God,* &c. *Ephraim* shall presently hear God saying, *Is* Ephraim *my dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* Is the Spouse *sick of love?* Cant. 5. 8. *Doth she indeed think her Beloved the chiefest amongst ten thousand,* &c. She shall presently hear him saying, *Thou art beautiful O my Love as* Tirzah, *&c. Turn away thine Eyes from me,* &c. *ch. 6. v. 4, 5.* I might instance in many Texts of Scripture, but I forbear. Will you know the reason of this? Take it, 1. *Negatively*, 2. *Positively.* Jer. 31. 18, 20. Cant. 5. 8. ch. 6. 4, 5.

1. *Negatively*, It is not because *there's any merit in duty.* Christ is no Merchant of Grace, he gives it, but he sells it not. Indeed it is a contradiction to speak of *meritorious duty*; if it be duty, it is the payment of a debt on our part, and can be no purchase-mony. The compass of that Commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy Soul, and with all thy strength, is of an exceeding latitude*; there's no finishing of it by any creature in this life. It was from the jejune Interpretation that the Pharisees of old, and the Papists of late, have put upon the Law of God, that

they ever dreamt that man was able to perform it, much less do any thing of supererogation. The foundation-stone of man's Salvation is laid in Grace, and the top-stone is Grace too: To the whole Building you must cry. *Grace, Grace.* But Positively

2. It is *from the overflowings of Divine Grace in him who is our Fountain-head the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Eye that weeps for its sin, till it can weep no more, doth not by its tears make it self an Handkerchief to dry its Eyes, but a tender-hearted Saviour moved from his own bowels cannot but afford it one, and say unto it why weepest thou? The Soul, that for Christs sake parts with Father Mother, Children, Brethren, Sisters, all, doth not by this purchase to it self peace of Conscience or eternal life (Alas! what proportion is there betwixt things temporal, and such as are Spiritual and eternal?) But he who hath both these to give, gives them upon the Souls performing its duty in this particular, *Matth.* 19. 29. The Soul that casts up many a long look to the Lord Jesus Christ, and earnestly wisheth for his presence with it, and valueth it above the World, and seeks for it more then for Gold, or hid treasure, doth not by this earn Christs Love to it, but Christ from the fulness of his grace makes choice of this Soul, to reveal himself unto. The Prophet, *Isaiah Ch.* 30. *v.* 18. hath such an expression as this; *The Lord will wait that he may be gracious unto you*: Christ is a *fountain of Grace*; a full fountain: now when the fountain is brim full of water, the water waiteth for an opportunity to diffuse it self: it may be there is a bank that hinders the full river, that it cannot diffuse its water, the water therefore works secretly and softens the bank first till a breach be made, and then it emptieth it self by it. Christ is a sea, a full sea of Grace, but sinful man casts up a bank, against this sea, a bank of *unbelief*: A bank of *stone* (hardning his heart) a bank of *earth*, (favouring an earthly mind) a bank of *mud*, delights in sensual lusts and objects; Christ now cannot shew his grace to such a Soul, the bank hinders; where he pleaseth indeed he worketh secretly, takes away the heart of stone, and makes it an heart of flesh, takes away *unbelief*, vanity, earthly mindedness, sensual affections, and then he emptyeth the treasuries of grace upon the Soul, In a word, to apply this,

Isa. 30. 18.

Use 1. No wonder then, to hear many a poor wretch complain, that God never yet *spake peace* to his Soul: others indeed have heard their beloved hath said to others *behold thou art fair my love, behold thou art fair*, but they never yet heard such a voice. Let me ask thee,

thee, who thus complaineſt this queſtion, Did Chriſt ever yet hear thee ſay, *as a bundle of Myrrh is my beloved unto me, he ſhall lye all night betwixt my breaſts*? Haſt thou ſerved Chriſt with Ordinary expreſſions of duty? How canſt thou expect to be feaſted by him with extraordinary returns of mercy? If thy breathings after him have been faint, and ſhort, what reaſon haſt thou to expect, that his breathings ſhould be ſo full upon thee? He is indeed a full ocean of free grace, but it may be thou haſt caſt up a bank againſt him: it may be thou haſt clogg'd him with an hard heart, and unbelieving heart, a vain heart, a filthy ſenſual heart: Wonder not, O Chriſtian! that he is ſo little towards thee in a way of mercy, if thou beeſt ſcant towards him in thy way of duty. There is a generation of men and women in the world, who are taken notice of to behave themſelves as if they thought that all the World were made to ſerve them, and they not made to ſerve any (but they are an unreaſonable generation, and ſober perſons ſo account of them, and accordingly ſlight them.) Oh that there might not be ſuch an unreaſonable Chriſtian found in the World, who ſhould ſo much as think in his heart, that Chriſt ſtands concerned to open all his Treaſuries of Love upon his Soul, which in the mean time hath ſcarce a thought of doing any thing more than ordinary for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; if thou findeſt thy heart *cold in duty, frozen in affections toward Chriſt*, wonder not at all if thou findeſt the bowels of thy Saviour which yern upon others tied up towards thee. And I fear me this is the cauſe of moſt complaints of this nature, although it may be poſſible, that this is not the caſe of every ſuch complaining Soul; witneſs *David*, *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2, 3, 4. Pſal. 22. 1, 2, 3, 4.

2. *What an ingagement doth this Notion of Truth lay upon the Sons and Daughters of men, to ſtretch out their Souls for and towards God.* Certainly if there be any thing in the World of force to open a Soul for Chriſt, this will do it; to hear that *Divine Grace* keeps *pace with our duty*, and that the proper way to have Chriſt ſpeak to us and ſay, *Thou art fair my Love, Thou art fair*, is for us to get up our hearts in a readineſs, to ſay, and ſay it in truth; *As a bundle of Myrrh is my Beloved to me.* The Pſalmiſt cries out, *Pſal.* 34. 12. *What man is he that deſireth life, and loveth many days that he may ſee good? Depart from evil, and do good, ſeek peace, and purſue it.* Give me leave to ſpeak to all you who fear the Lord, in the ſame dialect: What man is there amongſt you, who would not gladly have Chriſt ſpeak peace unto your Souls, and whiſper the words of my Text in your Ears; *Thou art fair my Love, thou art fair.* O let Uſe 2.

Chriſt

Christ be yet more and more precious to you; let him have the strength of your Love, that you may have the seal of his Love; let the World know, and let him know, that he is dear in your Eyes, that you may know that you are fair in his Eyes. But this is enough for the second Circumstance which I observed; *I* pass to a third.

3 Circumst. *Thou art fair my Love, thou art fair.* It is not said, thou O man! or thou O woman art fair! but thou *my Love art fair.* It is both the observation of our own Annotators, and some others.

Obs. *The Spouse of Christ is fair as she is His Love.*

רעיתי I observed to you before, that the word signifies *Amica, & Socia,* a Friend, and a Companion, the Object of ones *love,* and the *Companion of ones life.* This is not after the manner of the Children of men, amongst them *Beauty raiseth Love,* but with Christ it is *Love that raiseth Beauty. Locutio verbi infusio Doni*; Christ in calling her fair, makes her fair, *Ezek.* 16. 14. *Thy Beauty was perfect through my comeliness which was put upon thee, saith the Lord God.* A good complexion, with a lovely air of the countenance, and a due proportion of bodily parts, makes the Children of men fair to a sensual Eye. An head well furnished with Notions of Learning, and a mind indued with vertuous, generous dispositions, makes a man fair and beautiful to a rational Eye; But it is Grace alone that can make the Soul fair to the Divine Eye.

1. *Nature doth it not*; for all are by Nature Children of wrath, *Eph.* 2. 3. like the Infant, not cut, not washed, not swadled, *Ezek.* 16. We are by Nature all Blackamores in the Eyes of God, our Father an *Amorite*, our *Mother an Hittite.* 2. *Art will not do it*; *Though thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me (saith the Lord,) Jer.* 2. 22. The Pharisees were men who used as much Art as others, yet their Beauty (to our Saviour's Eye) rose no higher than to the Beauty of a *Painted Sepulchre*, that outwardly is beautiful, but within full of rottenness; so little, that our Saviour saith, *Publicans* and *Harlots* should (as to the Kingdom of Heaven) have the preheminence before them.

3. *Grace then alone must do it.* Those who are Christ's Love, are fair only so far forth as they are *his Love, his Companions.* There is a *double Grace*; the first of *Justification*, the second of *Sanctification*; according to the first, the Believer is *Christ's Love*, according to the second the Believer is *Christ's Companion.*

1. I say first, the *Grace of Justification*; this is *gratia gratum faciens*, that Grace by which the Soul is accepted of God. It is the

free

free Love of God shewn to the humbled Soul upon its exercise of Faith, pardoning its sins, reckoning over the Righteousness of Christ unto it, and accepting it as righteous in and through Christ; this changeth the Soul's state; this is it which taketh away its filthy garments, and covereth the Soul with Christ's Robes; with this is conjoined the Grace of Regeneration, by which God changeth the Soul's nature and disposition; old things pass away with it, and all things become new; this is no quality infused into us, or inherent in us, but the free and pure love and good will of Christ imbracing us.

2. The second is the *Grace of Sanctification*; this makes the Believer the Companion of Christ, having both a fellowship with the death of Christ, in *dying to sin*, and with the *life of Christ*, in *living unto newness of life*: Upon these accounts, and these only is the Believing Soul fair in the Eyes of Christ. Before I part with this Observation,

Use. Let every gracious Soul make a stand upon it, and consider what it *affords him for Consolation*, while he looks over his Soul, and sees it full of spots, and taking a review of his life, he can find no ground of hope to his Soul, that Christ should cast an Eye of love and pity upon him, he sees there's no proportion between his duties, or any actions of his conversation, and the holy Law of God. Well, yet the comfort lies here, that the Lord hath not said, *Blessed is the man that hath no sin*, for who liveth and sinneth not against God? but *Blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; and to whom the Lord imputeth no sin*, Psal. 32. 1. If we once lose this great Truth, of the *Justification of a poor Soul, by the Righteousness of Christ*, we have cut up a Bridge which we shall see a need of to go over, as often as we enter into any serious thoughts of our own state, the weight of all our Souls, and all the comfort of them hangs upon this one pin. *That what the law could not do, because it was weak through our flesh, that God hath done sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.* We have lost all that day that we forsake that desire of St. *Paul to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is of God: Even the righteousness of God by faith in Jesus Christ.*

Psal. 32. 1.

Rom. 8. 3.

But you will say, How shall we know that *Christ hath thus loved us*? That must be known by our loving him, and so the matter will return to the same point. We freely grant that our Justification

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is to be evidenced for our Sanctification, and that even the witness of Gods Spirit is not a single, but a joint Testimony, together with our Spirits. But yet there is a great difference (as to Christians comfort) in these things. *That Soul that looks to be made fair with his own works* (if he rightly understand himself) shall never be Satisfied concerning his Spiritual beauty: because his works must necessarily be compleatly perfect, otherwise the law accuseth, and curseth him. But he who acknowledgeth that his beauty is meerly from grace, freely justifying, but yet his receiving of this grace is to be evidenced by his works, stands concerned no further to enquire concerning the perfection of his works in order to this end, then only to see if they be perfect according to Gospel allowances, not according to law-strictness. And such are the Gospel terms, that *if there* be a *willing mind*, a *presence to will*, a *delight in the Law of God as to the inward man*, it is accepted of God. Here's a bottom for him.

4 Circumst. I proceed to the 4th Circumstance, which I observed relating to the first Proposition of the Text, and that was the term, *Behold*, which is prefixed, *Behold! thou art fair*, and doubled, *Behold, Behold.* There is a threefold use of this particle in Scripture: it denotes 1. *presence of a thing.* 2. *Certainty.* 3. *Eminency.* It may in this Text denote all three.

1. It may denote the *present state of a believing Soul* to *be a beautiful state. Behold thou art fair*, now in this life, while thou art *black* with infirmities, and corruptions, black through afflictions, and temptations, yet even now thou art fair, 1 *Joh* 3. 2. Beloved, *Now we are the Sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* This particle is often thus used in holy Writ: *Gen.* 29.2,25. and it is capable enough of this sense in this Text. *Behold thou art fair*, thou shalt not only be hereafter *beautiful*, when the Crown of glory shall be set upon thy head, but thou art now beautiful, thou doest not apprehend thy self so, thou art bewailing thy spots, and thy infirmities, but I look upon thee as fair, with all thy spots, I look upon thee as beautiful even now.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

2. It denotes the *certainty of a thing.* Behold is a particle of *Demonstration*, and is often so used in Scripture. There is nothing more certain, then what we can *behold.* Thus the particle is used, Gen. 16. 2. *Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from bearing* (they are the words of *Sarah*) that is, the Lord hath

certainly

certainly restrained me; see *Gen.* 18. 27. The believing Soul is (certainly) a beauteous Soul. The Beauty of that Soul which truly believes in Jesus Christ is not an *imaginary thing*, it is a true, and real thing, it is a *certainty*; *Behold thou art fair*, &c.

3. Lastly this particle *Behold* doth very often denote *eminency*, and *excellency*. When something is *wonderful in Nature* or otherwise, the Scripture useth to make mention of it, by prefixing this particle *Behold* to it. So *James* 3. 3, 4. It is a wonderful thing, that the strength of an Horse should be ruled by a bit, and that so great a *bulk*, as a ship, driven about with fierce winds, should be turned about with a very small helm; and thus it is very often used in Scripture, and it may have that use here. *Behold thou art fair* (*My Love*!) *Behold thou art fair*; and so it may hint to us these two things.

1. *That the beauty of a believer is no ordinary beauty, but a rare, and eminent, beauty*, not like the beauty of Woman, not like that vain thing which we call *beauty* in a natural sense which is only the object of the lust of the Eye: no, it is a *Spiritual beauty*, which age will not deface, diseases will not spoil, no outward accidents will hurt; a beauty that is not exposed to wind, and weather. The Kings Daughter is *all glorious within*; and yet so great is her glory, that the King of Kings desires her beauty. Or secondly it may denote this,

2. *That it is a wonderful thing, that Christ should account a Child of* Adam, *a poor believing Soul beauteous.* When *David* considered the Heavens and the Earth, he cries out, *What is man* (O Lord!) *that thou shouldst remember him*, or the Son of man that thou shouldest be mindful of him? It is a matter of high admiration to any ingenuous Soul to sit down and think, that Jesus Christ should account it beautiful. But I hasten to the last Circumstance.

I observed to you that the phrase is doubled: Christ doth not only say, *thou art fair* (my Love) but he doubles the phrase, *Thou art fair, thou art fair*. There is doubtless nothing superfluous in holy Writ, though possibly there may be something both in the matter, and stile, of which we can give no Satisfactory account: almost in all languages these repetitions and reduplications of words and phrases are usual. The *Hebr.* is very full of them; they are of several uses. I shall note such of them as may be properly applied to this Text. 5 Circumst.

1. Sometimes *the doubling of a word or phrase denotes the certainty of the thing or action*, Gen. 22. 13. *Know of a surety*, thy seed shall be a stranger, &c. In the Heb. it is, *knowing thou mayest know*. And thus frequently in the new Testament, *verily verily*, denotes the exceeding certainty of the Proposition spoken, and thus it may do in this Text, *thou art fair* my Love, *thou art fair*. That is, thou art certainly very fair.

2. Sometimes it is to note the exceeding *earnestness* and *intention* of *him who speaketh*. *Bis dictum magis dicitur*. Thus it is often used in Scripture, *Gen.* 14. 10. *The valley of* Siddim *was full of slimepits*, (so we translate it) in the *Hebr.* A valley *of pits of pits*. So in many Texts: other Writers, amongst whom *Julius Scaliger*, &c. much Commend this form of speaking, as having in it a great kind of force and vehemency: according to this usage, the sense is, *thou art exceeding fair my Love*, which comporteth, with what he had said before, *v.* 8. where he had called the Spouse, *thou fairest amongst Women. Christ hath his delight amongst the Sons of men.* He takes no such delight in the Angels as in believers.

Numb. 1. Exod. 26.

3. Repetitions (thirdly) of the same word or phrase, in Scripture *sometimes note a distribution*. And so the sense may be this, *thou art fair* my Love, *thou art fair*; *Thou art justified by my grace*, and so thou art fair; *thou art Sanctified in my name*, so thou art fair; thou art fair without and thou art fair within, thou art fair in this part, and fair in that part, fair in every part.

4. Lastly (to mention no more) Repetitions are often used by Orators not only to express a *vehemency of intention, in him that speaketh, and the certainty of the thing that is spoken, but to beget a vehemency, and earnestness of attention in him that heareth*, and Interpreters of holy Writ do assign this as one reason of the use of them in several places of Scripture, when the Holy-Ghost designeth earnestly to inculcate the thing spoken, and to beget in us a belief of it: hence now we may learn these things which I will but name, and conclude what I have to say from the consideration of the Circumstances of the first Proposition of the Text.

1. The *beauty of a believing Soul is unquestionable*, it is not in a complement that Christ saith the believing Soul is beautiful: it is not a seeming beauty, but a certain beauty.

2. *The*

2. *The beauty which grace gives the Soul is an eminent beauty*, not an ordinary, but an eminent beauty. The phrase is doubled to denote eminency.

3. The Beauty of a believing Soul is a *manifold beauty*: A beauty in every part.

4. *It is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ, that a believing Soul should know, and believe it self to be a beauteous Soul.* A Gracious Soul may debase it self too much, and often err as much in having too mean thoughts of it self, as the hypocrite doth in having too high thoughts of himself, thinking of himself above what he ought to think.

But I intend not to enlarge a discourse upon these things, having spoken to them, or at least to some of them before, thus much is sufficient to have noted concerning the Circumstances; I proceed to the second part of the Text, *Thou hast Doves Eyes.*

The Proposition of this Text is plain enough. *The true Spouse of Christ hath Doves Eyes.* I before observed to you, that some read it, thy Eyes are like the Eyes of a Dove: others thy Eyes are as a pair of Doves: but as the difference is not much, so I see no reason to deviate from our English translation. For the explication and confirmation of the Proposition (for I will join both together) we will enquire these three things. Prop.

1. *Qu. Why Our Saviour in commending his Spouse begins with her Eyes*, and only Commends her for them?

2. *Qu. What is here meant by the Spouses Eyes?*

3. *Qu. Why the Spouse is said to have the Eyes of Doves rather then of any other creature?*

1. *Qu. Why doth our Saviour, here Commend the Spouse only for her Eyes?*

1. The general account which Interpreters give of it, is this; That it is a *Synechdoche*, and by a figure, according to which a considerable part is often put for the whole, our Saviour doth here speak his whole Spouse to be like a Dove, like a *Doves Eye*. Indeed we are commanded to be harmless as Doves, *Matth.* 10. 16. And the Church is called Gods *Turtle Dove*, *Psal.* 74. 19. And *David* wisheth that he had the *wings of a Dove*, *Psal.* 55. 6. The shape of a *Dove* was that shape which the Spirit of God chose, when it descended upon Christ: And the coming in of the Gentiles to Christ is set out by the flockings of *Doves*

to the Windows, Isa. 60. 8. And the Eye (of all the members) is the most considerable as to beauty, a good Eye much commendeth an ill complexion, and a bad Eye much blemisheth any other Symmetry of parts. And this may be allowed for one reason. But,

2. The *Soul doth much discover it self at the Eye.* It is the casement at which it shews it self: many of the Vertues, and Vices of the mind are read in the Eye; *wantonness* discovers it self at the Eye: hence you read in Scripture of *Eyes full of adultery*, 2. Pet. 2. 14. So doth *rage, pride, malice, envy* and many other vices, and as the evil, so the good dispositions and vertues of the Soul, are much discovered by the Eye too: so that indeed which our Saviour commendeth his Spouse for her *Eyes*, he commendeth her whole *Soul*, and it is but a proof of what he had before said, *Thou art fair my beloved, thou art fair.* Thou hast Doves Eyes, proves that.

2. *Qu. What is here meant by the Spouses Eyes?*

After such a resolution, as I gave to the first question, this might seem needless, if Interpreters had not led me the way, who are in doubt whether our Saviours design here be to commend those bodily parts of his Spouse, or some *inward parts*, called *Eyes* by a Metaphor, the difference is not much, for supposing him to resemble the Eyes of her body to *Doves Eyes*, the reason is because of those gracious dispositions in her Soul, which by her Eyes discover themselves, and are like the natural inclinations of Doves; if he speaks of the *Eyes of her mind*, and his meaning be that his Spouses *understanding* (which is the Eye of the Soul) is like *a Doves Eyes*, the thing is much the same. Unquestionably, that which our Saviour here designs to Commend believers for is, the gracious dispositions of their Souls discovered in their outward conversation, much resembling, the natural dispositions and behaviours of Doves. But the chief thing we have to enquire into for the full understanding of our Saviours meaning in this Text, is,

3. *Qu. What these rare and remarkable properties are in Doves, or in the Eyes of Doves more then in other creatures, for which our Saviour resembleth his Spouse to them, either to shew us what true believers are, or ought to be?*

The Dove is a creature sufficiently known to us; a creature which of old God made use of in Sacrifices, rejecting others.

It

It was the creature sent out of the Ark by *Noah*, which brought the olive branch. Naturalists observe many remarkable things of the Dove. Give me leave to open to you, the aptness of the similitude in nine or ten particulars.

1. The Doves Eyes are *meek and harmless Eyes*. Hence Naturalists observe that the Dove presently forgets an injury, and builds her nest and lays her eggs, and hatcheth her young, where her nest was newly destroyed, and her young ones taken away, *Matth.* 10. 16. *Be harmless as Doves.* The cruelty and revenge of the mind is much seen in the Eye, *Prov.* 23. 6. you read of him that hath an *evil Eye*: there is a *bewitching Eye* and a *flaming sparkling Eye*; in which you may see the sparks of that rage, and envy, and anger, which flame in the Soul, you may read rapine, and cruelty, and mischief, in an Hawks Eye, but in a Doves Eye nothing but meekness: the old verse saith,

Fille Columba caret, *rostro non-ladit, & ungues*
Possidet innocuos ---.

A Dove wants gall, and though it hath nails and claws, yet it gripes none with them. The Dove doth not wholly want gall, but Naturalists say, it hath but very little (compared with other creatures;) and hence it is, that it is very gentle, peaceable, fearful, and doth no other bird hurt: Believers are compared to *Sheep*, and to *Doves*. Sheep have horns, but they hurt none with them: Doves have claws, but they hurt none with them: and (as I said before) this may be read in their Eyes in which you do not see such a sharpness, and sparkling as it were of fire, as in the Eyes of birds of prey: Believers have, or should have Doves Eyes: *Samuel* is able to stand up and say, *whose Ox have I taken? Or whose Ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded?* Our Saviour commands us that we should be innocent as Doves; in malice they are Children, 1 *Cor.* 14. it is the Apostles Command, *Eph.* 4. 31. *Let all bitterness, and wrath, & anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice.* Believers when *unregenerate lived in malice, and envy, hateful, and hating one another*, Tit. 3. 3. But, *Col.* 3. 8. *They have put off all these, anger, wrath, malice*, &c. And it is their business to be still laying them aside: every true Believer hath something of a Doves Eye, and it is his work to be daily getting his heart up to it more and more.

Mat. 10. 16.
1 Cor. 14. 20.
Eph. 4. 31.
Titus 3. 3.
Col. 3. 8.

2. *A*

2. *A Doves Eye* secondly, is a *Satisfied Eye*. The satisfaction of the sensible and reasonable Soul, is much discerned in the Eye. You shall discern a *greedines in the Eye of an Hawk*, to let you know, that if it were loose it would be tearing: And you shall ordinarily know a man of a covetous spirit, and a discontented spirit by his Eye, *Prov.* 28. 22. *He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil Eye*. You shall discern a *gladness in a Doves Eye*, which speaks it a contented, satisfied creature. Such should a Believer be; such is a true Believer, *Heb.* 13. 5. *Let your conversation be without covetousness*, and *be content with such things as you have. I have learned* (saith Saint *Paul*) *in all estates to be content*. Faith teacheth a Soul to cast its care upon God, believing that *he* careth for it: Faith teacheth him to depend upon the Promise, which Godliness hath; to trust to a *Provident Deus*: This now is a Doves Eye, an Eye which is not greedy of gain, which doth not covet its Neighbours House, nor Ground, nor Wife, nor Oxe, nor Ass, nor any thing which is his.

Prov. 28. 22.

Heb. 13. 5.

1 Tim. 6. 8.

3. *The Dove's Eye is a Benign Eye*. You do not only not discern any thing of rage and fury, or cruelty, and greediness in a Dove's Eye; but you discern a certain *kindness*, and (as it were) *a good will in it*: Hence it is very friendly amongst its fellows, and it loves an habitation near dwelling-houses of men. Doves Eyes are *Benign Eyes*. Believers have, and should have Doves Eyes, *Eph.* 4. 32. *Be you kind one to another*; they are commanded to *Godliness* to add *Brotherly kindness*; and *Col.* 3. 12. *to put on kindness*. What *Solomon* saith of the good woman, *Prov.* 31. 26. is true of a Believer; in a *Believer's Tongue is the Law of kindness*; they know the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the great kindness of their Saviour to them. Grace takes away that currishness and doggedness, which makes men rugged in their speeches and behaviour, and churlish in their spirits; and if ought of this remains upon their hearts, it is because their Faith is but in part, and they have yet a body of death, some unmortified corruption that yet remains in them, which is in the fault; for Grace is of a benign, kind nature; the Believer hath *Doves Eyes*. Look as it is with a Dove; let a Cock be feeding, that's a churlish creature, and will endure none to be near it: The Dove is kind, and allows room to all commers; such a kindness there is now in a Believer's heart, where Grace hath taken its full hold.

4. *Doves Eyes are lowly Eyes*. The pride and haughtiness of the Natural disposition, both in sensible and rational creatures, is much seen in the Eyes: You discern a proud and lofty Bird by the surli-

ness

ness of its Eye; and so it is in a reasonable creature. Hence you read of a *proud look*, Prov. 6. 17. (one of the things which God hateth; and *Prov.* 21. 4. *an high look, and a proud heart are put together.* And in brute creatures, the height of the Natural disposition is seen in the scornful Eye of *Lions, Hawks, Parrots*, &c. But a Dove hath lowly Eyes. Now a Believer hath Doves Eyes. Take *carnal*, natural men, they are proud and scornful; they are sometimes in Scripture described under the Notion of the *scornful*, *Psal.* 1. 1. *Isa.* 28. 14. But the believing Soul is an *humble Soul*. It is the Law of their Profession, *Micah* 6. 8. They must *walk humbly with their God*. They cannot serve the Lord but *with all humility of mind*, *Acts* 20. 19. It is their *clothing*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. and they duly put it on, *Col.* 3. 12. They talk not high things, they affect not, they seek not high things, (that is, of this World;) indeed they *seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*; but this they do with all *humility of mind*, confessing with the Prodigal, that they are not worthy to be called the Sons of God.

5. *Doves Eyes are simple Eyes.* As other vertues or vices of the mind, so truth and falshood, simplicity and craft, or doubleness of mind, are much discerned in the Eye. There are some brute creatures, that discover far more natural sagacity and craftiness than others in their looks; and so there are also some men, that you say of them, they look as if they were false-hearted, and oft-times you do not take your mark amiss. But now amongst brute creatures, the Dove's Eye *is simple*, you see no deceitfulness, no craft or subtlty in that, *Matth.* 10. 16. *Be you wise as Serpents, and ἀκέραιοι οἱ αἱ ἀκεραῖαι*, we translate it, *harmless*, as Doves; but there is a doubt upon it whether ἀκέραιος be compounded of ἀ & κέρας, a horn (then it signifies *without an Horn, as Doves*, and we translate it well enough harmless) or whether it be not compounded of ἀ & κεράω, which signifies to *make a mixture*. Such should the Saints be, *simple, without mixture*; Christ was so, *there was no guile in his mouth*, *Phil.* 1. 10. without deceit in their hearts; they should not have *an heart*, and *an heart*. It was *Paul's* glorying, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *That he had his conversation in godly sincerity.* Mat. 10. 16.

6. *Doves Eyes are clean Eyes.* Hence it feeds upon pure grains, drinks no other than pure water, delights most in houses of a pure white colour, which the Poet observed of old, *Aspicis ut veniant ad candida tecta columbæ.* And many other things are reported by Naturalists of the cleanliness of this Bird. The Believer is one of a

pure

pure heart, *Joh.* 15. 3. *You are clean* (saith our Saviour) *through the word I have spoken to you*; he is one of clean hands, and a pure heart, *Psal.* 24. 4. of a *clean heart*, *Psal.* 73. 1. *clean every whit*, *Joh.* 15. 10. his heart is *purified by Faith*, *Acts* 15. 9. he hath *purified his Soul in obeying the truth through the Spirit*; and he delights in pure company, his delight is *in the excellent*, *Psal.* 16. 3. The wicked shall not tarry in his sight, *Psal.* 101. he hath Doves Eyes.

7. Doves Eyes are *fearful*, *tender Eyes*; this experience teacheth, and Naturalists say, That it is caused by the little proportion of Gall that is in them: There is not in them indeed such a shiness and fearfulness as is in some other Birds, because they are (many of them) nursed up near to houses, and made familiar to men, but it is evident they are *trembling creatures*. The Spouse of Christ hath (upon this account) *Doves Eyes*. It is true, he hath not the fear of a reprobate upon him; he is more acquainted with God, and hath been bred up in nigher communion with God; yet he is very subject to fear; he *fears sinning against God*, and God cannot lay an hand upon him, but he is ready to tremble; he cannot cast an Eye upon any Judgment of God, but he shakes at the apprehension of an angry God in it: He hath Doves Eyes.

8. *The Dove's Eye is a mournful Eye.* Hence in Scripture the mourning of Doves is made use of to express sad mournings, *Isa.* 38. *v.* 14, *I did mourn like a Dove*, *Isa.* 59. 11. *We mourn sore like Doves.* I conceive it chiefly relates to the *mourning of Turtles.* The Saints Eyes too are *mourning Eyes*; they are persons of sorrowful spirits, broken and contrite spirits; and look as it is with Turtles, they never mourn so bitterly, as when they have lost their Companion; so it is with the Believer; he never so mourneth, as under the withdrawings of Divine Love. It is not proper for the Children of the Bridechamber to mourn while the Bridegroom is with them, but when he is gone, *Then they shall mourn.*

9. *The Doves Eyes are exceeding chast Eyes.* I noted to you before, that the uncleanness and wantonness of the heart much appears in the Eye. Hence the Apostle *Peter* mentions *Eyes full of Adultery.* There are large stories told of the Doves Chastity, especially Turtle Doves, and Stock Doves. Hence possibly it was, *Lev.* 12. 6. that a *Turtle Dove* was the Sacrifice which God appointed for the Woman after Child-birth. The Dove keeps to its Mate, and to him alone. The Saint too hath Doves Eyes, he cries out, *None but Christ! None but Christ!* he cleaves to Christ alone for

Justifi-

Justification, for *Sanctification*, for *Salvation*. Christ is his all in all, *Isa.* 17.7,8. *At that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his Eyes shall have respect to the holy one of* Israel, *and he shall not look to the Altars, the work of mens hands: Neither shall he respect that which his fingers hath made: Either the Groves or the Images.* No, he hath Doves Eyes.

10. *The Doves Eyes are quick Eyes.* Naturalists observe, that the flight of the Dove is very swift, so swift, that when they flie directly forward, no Hawk can take it; and for this quickness of flight, quickness of the Eye is necessary. The Spouse of Christ is quick-sighted too; its Eye immediately pierceth through a mist of difficulties and dangers; he believeth in hope against hope: When he doth not see by the Eye of Sense, yet he believeth: He hath Doves Eyes.

11. The Dove hath *Circumspect Eyes.* You shall observe this in it, that it seldom or never takes its flight toward the Earth, but it looks *this way*, and *that way*, and *every way*; and when it is alighted you shall discern it thrusting out it's Neck first on one side, then on another, to see that all be safe. The believer hath also *circumspect Eyes.* He should have, Eph. 5. 15. *See then that you walk circumspectly*, Psal. 39. *v.* 1. *I said I will take heed to my waies.* The Child of God should be like the Dove, not move a step in the World without casting its Eye of consideration upon its way first, considering whether the action which it is about to do, be like to bring glory to God: Whether it be consonant to a Divine rule. Eph. 5.15. Psal. 39. 1.

12. In the last place. The *Dove hath very observing Eyes.* hence let its flight be never so far, and remote from home, yet it finds its way thither again directly. Hence Historians tell us, that the *Romans* made great use of Doves; when they were absent a great way from home, they would by Doves which they carried with them, send home directions to their Servants, for the management of their business; and by the help of Doves, they would in their Wars keep intelligence with their Friends in their Enemies quarters: The Christian should likewise have *Observing Eyes*, to observe his own motions and actions, and to observe Divine Providences, *Prov.* 23: *v.* 26. *Let thine Eyes observe my waies*, &c. But I have inlarged enough in the Explication of the Metaphor; it is time that I should come to the Application; and so the Proposition may be useful to us: 1. By way of *Discovery.* 2. By way of *Exhortation.* *Varro.*

Use 1. This Notion discovers to us these two things; 1. *That there are but few in the World that can be allowed to be the Spouses of the Lord Jesus Christ.* 2. *That those who indeed are so, yet while they are here, are in a very imperfect estate,* very short of what they ought to be.

In the first place we may learn, *That there are but very few in the World that can be allowed to be the Spouse of Christ*; but a few to whom he can say, *You have Doves Eyes.* This Notion will separate divers, five or six sorts of persons (more especially) from having any relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Such who have *malicious, wrathful Eyes, sparkling with nothing but revenge and fury.* How many such Professors is this Age full of, *whose Eyes sparkle like a flaming fire?* they breathe out nothing but malice, and revenge, and cruelty, *Prov.* 30. 14. *There is a generation whose Teeth are Swords, and their Jaw-teeth as Knives,* Psal. 74. 19, 20. the least they can talk is of doing unto others as they have done to them, it may be seven times more. O! how contrary is this to the Spouse of Christ? *Psal.* 74. 19, 20. *v.* 19. The Church of Christ is called a *Turtle Dove*; what are her Enemies? *v.* 20. *The dark places of the Earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.* There's no reliques of cruelty in a Dove house, if you go in there, you will find no blood, no limbs of Birds; but if you find an *Hawk's Nest*, 'tis there you find the blood, and limbs of other Birds, better than it self. The tender Christian hath not his hand in the blood and ruine of his Brethren; you find not in his Habitations the Instruments of cruelty, nor any prey taken from the Widow and Fatherless: He hath Doves Eyes. I know no more certain character of one that is a stranger to Christ than this; Let me see one that is full of cruelty, (wanting tenderness of heart) malice, and revenge, &c. I shall easily conclude him to be one who never digested that Gospel Precept well, *Matth.* 5. 44, 45. The Whelps of the roaring Lion are continually crying for blood, and rapine, and plunder, but the Spouse of Christ hath learned from him (concerning her Enemies) to say, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

2. Set aside those also whose *Eyes are never satisfied, Prov.* 27. *v.* 20. *Covetous greedy worldlings;* these have Hawks Eyes, and not Doves Eyes: And ah! how full is the World of these Birds of prey too? those that are like the Grave, and like to Hell, that never say, *There is enough*, but their whole business is to look about for more still,

ſtill, and to cry with the Horſleaches Daughter, *Give, Give, Prov.* 30. 15, 16, 17. *The Horſleach hath two Daughters crying, Give, Give.* Nor doth any thing come amiſs to them; they never conſult Conſcience in it, whether they can enjoy their deſires without ſinning againſt God, or doing injury to others, or no. The *Dove* takes the meat which is thrown to it, and is ſatisfied; however, it feeds not it ſelf to the prejudice of any other Bird (as the Hawk doth.) A good Chriſtian hath learned in all eſtates to be content, and is ſatisfied with the portion God allots to him; he ſeeks nothing to the injury of another in his right; he covets not what is his neighbours; the World is a wide Sea, he fiſheth with his neighbour, but he robs not his neighbours Net, nor ſuffereth his heart to covet what he hath in it. The covetous man is none of Chriſt's Spouſe. That's the ſecond.

3. Hence alſo *the Proud man is ſhut out from any true Relation to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Give me leave ſtill to go on with the Wiſe man, *Prov.* 30. 13. *There is a generation, Oh! how lofty are their Eyes! and their Eye-lids are lifted up!* But what are they? Are they the Spouſe of Chriſt? *David* ſaith, *Pſal.* 131. 1. *Lord, mine Heart is not haughty, nor my Eyes lofty.* They are ſuch as God ſhall humble, *Iſa.* 5. 15. *Iſa.* 2. 11. The *Pſalmiſt* brings it in as an Evidence, that men were corrupt becauſe they ſpake *loftily, Pſal.* 73. 8. The pride and haughtineſs of many ſpeaks it unto their faces, that they have not Doves Eyes. Prov. 30. 13. Pſal. 131. 1. Pſal. 73. 8.

4. Hence fourthly; *Unclean perſons are ſhut out from the Kingdom of God.* Such as (to uſe St. *Peter's* expreſſion, *1 Pet.* 2. 14.) *have Eyes full of Adultery*, that have *wanton Eyes*, as the Prophet *Iſaiah* expreſſeth it, *Iſa.* 3. 16. But I ſhall not need inlarge upon this, *1 Cor.* 6. 9 Theſe (continuing ſuch) *are ſhut out of the Kingdom of God:* And every one who underſtandeth any thing of the mind of God, will agree in this, and even Reaſon it ſelf will allow the Sentence. 1 Pet. 2. 14. Iſa. 3. 16.

5. *Hypocrites are alſo*, by this, ſhut out of *the number of thoſe who are Spouſes to Chriſt.* You have heard there is a great deal of *ſimplicity in the Dove*, which diſcovers its ſelf at the Eye. The deceitful Eye is not the Eye of a Saint: Such are thoſe mentioned in the aforementioned Text of *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a generation that is pure in their own Eyes, and yet is not waſhed from their filthineſs.* It is ſaid of *Jacob*, *Gen.* 25. 27. that he was a *plain man.* This is a great commendation of a Chriſtian; a true Chriſtian *is a plain* Gen. 25. 27.

man; an Hypocrite lies in folts, there is many an hole in an Hypocrite, but that it is hid under plaits of seeming Sanctity, but the Child of God hath no doublings in his heart, he hath Doves *Eyes*.

2. *Br.* But in the second place, you may observe from what you have heard, *that even the Children of God in this life are very imperfect*. There is none of them but have something of a Doves Eye; something of all these habits of graces which I have noted to you under this comparison: yea and so much as may distinguish them from others, but yet where's the Soul that hath a perfect Doves Eye, either for *quickness, or cleanness, or circumspection*. But I had rather press these under the Notion of an use of

Use 2. Exhortation. The Proposition in that latitude according to which I have expounded it, indeed doth rather speak what every Child of God should be, then what he is. Every Child of God hath the habits of these graces, but they are in all imperfect, the things which we should press after, although who can say he hath attained. Give me leave therefore to press you all, who hear me this day,

1. *Those of* you, (if there be any such) *who are prejudiced against the wales of God, to a good Opinion of the wales, and People of God, because the walkers therein have, or should have Doves Eyes.*

2. Those of you who are entred into them, to *shew it forth in your conversation that you have Doves Eyes.*

1 Branch. 1. In the first place. *Let me take the advantage of my Text to make an Apology for my Master, and those who take upon them the profession of his Gospel in-sincerity.* Christs Friends are not the Persons the World takes them for, *They have Doves Eyes.* Our Saviour hath of old told us, *Luk.* 17. 1. *That it is impossible but that offences must come.* And Lu. 7. 23. *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* The World is peevish to the Lord Jesus Christ, and seeketh occasions against that sect, which followeth him most closely. 'Tis every where spoken against. Christians were so of old, and I fear me much of the rancor lies still in mens hearts, though it be more bit in through policy. There are two things, that as in all times, so in our times, have highly contributed to the Scandal and reproach of Religion.

Luk. 17. 1. Luk. 7. 23.

1. The

1. *The intruding of many false friends into that honourable profession.* The flock of Christ would be much more lovely in the World, if we could remove out of them all those that are *ringstraked, spotted,* and *speckled,* all Hypocrites, I mean, but it is Gods will the tares and wheat should grow together tell the harvest.

2. The 2d is, *The imperfect state of the very best of Gods People.* Which *makes them subject to many failings.* And what you have in the English Proverb, *It is safer for one to steal an Horse then for another to look over the hedge,* is eminently true of the Child of God, and the man of the World. The worldling may cut a Purse, and not make so much a noise, as if the Child of God shall drop one Penny of unjust gain into it. But methinks (were the World but rational) it were not an hard matter to reconcile them to a better Opinion of the waies of God, by an easy distinction, betwixt the *fault of a rule* or *way,* and the *Miscarriage of a Person* pretending to walk by that rule. The Saint hath or should *have Doves Eyes*; doest thou therefore see any Challenging to himself the honourable name of a Christian, and yet *cruel, revengeful, full of malice, deceitful, hypocritical, unchast,* or the like, how unreasonable a thing is it for thee to say presently, see what *these Puritans are,* these are the *Saints*; and how much more reasonable and just were it for thee to say, *Either these men are not what they seem to be,* or if *they have any root of goodness, they have foul failings, and make work for repentance.* A man may justly be offended at a *professor,* for his Sins, and unsutable walking to his Profession, but wo to that man that is *offended at Christ*! *Blessed is that man who is not offended in Christ.* Religion teacheth none *rapine,* and *plunder,* and *cruelty, and unmerciful dealings;* it teacheth none *covetousness,* and *unjust gains,* &c. Their lusts teach them this. Charge it not upon Christ, nor upon the Gospel to which they make a Profession charge these things upon the *lusts and corruptions of professors,* and upon *their temptations*; so you shall do no wrong. In the second place,

Let this engage you all, who own the honourable name of *Christians,* to *labour to answer this Metaphor,* to shew by your conversations, that you have *Doves Eyes.* Labour for harmless dispositions; when Christ sent out his disciples, *Lu.* 10. 4. he saith, *behold I send you as Lambs amongst Wolves.* The Christian must expect to meet with Wolves in the World but he is to be 2 Branch. Luk. 10. 4.

Prov. 20. 22. be as a *Lamb amongst Wolves*, as a *Lilly amongst thorns*, Prov. 20. 22. *say not then I will recompense evil, but wait on the Lord, and he shall save thee.* 2. Labour for *contentedness of Spirit.* 3. *For a benign kind temper to others*, for humility, for plainness of heart, and so for those other graces which I have instanced in, let them shine forth in you. I shall not enlarge upon each of them, but only press them upon you by some general arguments, by general, I mean such as will sute every of them. They shall be four.

1 Motive. *Thus shall you fulfil the will of Christ concerning you.* The Apostle pressing Sanctification makes use of this, argument, *For you know what Commandment we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your Sanctification*, 1 Thess. 4. 2, 3. Certainly no higher argument can be used. I know nothing that a Christian (as to the practick part of his duty) hath to do, but to inquire *what is the will of God concerning him.* Thus others would have me do, thus my own corrupt heart would have me do, but what would God have me do? *What would Christ have me be?* Doest thou like an ingenuous Soul ask what Christ would have thee be? Much of the will of God concerning thee, is wrapt up in this, it is his will that thou shouldst have *Doves Eyes*, it is the will of God that thou shouldest have harmless Eyes, and clean Eyes, and chast Eyes, *&c.* These are the expectations of Christ upon thy Soul. The Devil would have thee have an Hawks Eye, that when he shews thee where thou mayst execute malice revenge, cruelty safely, thou mightest fall upon it, that when he sheweth thee a wedg of Gold, and a Babylonish garment thou mayest take it without scruple, but this is the will of Christ that thou shouldest have a Doves Eye and do injury to none: the Devil would have thee have wanton Eyes, Eyes full of Adultery, that when thou seest a beautiful strumpet, thou mightest run after her, but Christ would have thee to have a *Doves Eye.* The Devil would have thee have a lofty Eye, that when he shews thee an object of ambition, thou mightest wound thy Conscience in straining for it: but Christ would have thee to have a *Doves Eye*, to be meek and lowly. And methinks to a Christian (whose very denomination sounds a man subjected to the will and Law of Christ,) this argument should be sufficient to him, to ingage him to labour towards this perfection, and to endeavour after these *Doves Eyes* mentioned in the Text.

But

But Secondly, *Thus you shall be like unto the Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Motive.
Christ is the unquestionable *Idea of all perfection*, and there is nothing more worthy of a Christian, then to labour after a conformity to Christ, to make Christ his *Archetypon*, In many sciences, in order to a mans perfection imitation is as much his concernment, as his following the rules, and Precepts of Art. I am sure it is so in the great *Mystery* of *Godliness*: it is the business which God is doing with us by his Providences, *Rom.* 8. 29. and which we ought to endeavour in our practice, *Phil.* 3. 10. *to be made conformable unto the Image of the Son of God He hath given us an example*, *John* 13. 15. and he hath left us an example, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. now what were Christs Eyes? *Cant.* 5. 12. *His Eyes are as the Eyes of Doves.* It were an easy matter here to run through all the aforementioned particulars. He had *harmless Eyes.* Whose Oxe did he ever take? Whom did he ever defraud? To whom did he do wrong? Upon whom did he ever revenge himself? Nay *when he was reviled* (saith *Peter*) he *reviled not again*, but suffered quietly, *&c.* He had *satisfied Eyes.* What *Covetousness* was he ever guilty of? he had a bag indeed, but it was for the poor, he had not an hole where to *hide his head.* Yet he neither coveted the holes of the Fox, nor the Nests of the Birds. He had *Benign Eyes*, upon whom did not he look kindly? To whom was he not ready to do good? He had *meek and lowly Eyes*, he says of himself, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.* He had *simple Eyes*, no guile was found in his mouth, no deceit in his heart, no doubleness in his actions, *&c.* He had clean Eyes, he delighted not in filthy conversation, not in filthy company or places, if he came at a publicanes and sinners house, it was to make it clean and a fit habitation for his holiness. He had mournful Eyes, he wept over *Hierusalem* as truly as a *Turtle* that hath lost its mate. He hath *chast Eyes*, not only in a *carnal* but a Spiritual sense, all *his delight is in the Sons of men*, in the Souls of his People. By *Doves Eyes* Christians! you shall be like the Lord Jesus Christ whose Eyes you see were such, and like the holy Spirit, which descended in the form of a Dove; and what more honourable for a Christian then to be like Christ; for a godly man, then to be like God?

Thus (Thirdly) *you shall distinguish your selves, from those* 3
who only glory in appearance. The Apostle tells us of some *that*
glory

glory in appearance, only but *not in heart*, 2. *Cor.* 5. 12. Now it should be the great business of a Christian, to distinguish himself from these. Christ tells his disciples, (*Joh.* 8. 31.) *that if they would continue in his word then they should be his disciples indeed*, ἀληθῶς, there are many in the World that are so but φαινόμενοι, in *shew and appearance*. *The Doves Eye is a certain* note of a disciple of Christ; many have the countenance of Doves, and the voice of Doves but they have not the Eye of Doves; an Hypocrite may *groan* like a Dove, and may look like a Dove in some part of his conversation, but yet want the Eye of a Dove. The *Eye is a* noble part of the body, *it discovers a man much*, and it *serves him much*. Our Saviour saith, *the* Mat. 6. 22. *light of the body is the Eye*, Matth. 6. 22. *if therefore thine Eye be single, thy whole body is full of light. But if thine Eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* He speaks (chiefly) of the danger of an evil Eye, and its unprofitableness to the body. It is true concerning the Soul, an *evil Eye* discovers an *evil Soul* (in a great measure.) O labour therefore for Doves Eyes, that you may have an evidence to your own Souls, and that you may by them evidence unto others, that you are such as glory not in appearance only, but in deed.

4 Motive. My last argument shall be from the honour & repute which by them you will gain to your Master & *to his Gospel in the World*. It is one of the great things, that a Christian hath to take care of, that the name of God for his sake be not Blasphemed in the World, and on the contrary, it should be his great care so to order his conversation, as that by the ordering of it he may in the World gain a name, and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to his Gospel, and bring up a good report of the land of *Canaan*, and the Inhabitants thereof. Now could we find a Christian, that were harmless and innocent, doing injury to none, slow to conceive wrath, ready to forgive, free from greedines of the World, and covetousness after that to which he hath no right, kind, and courteous, meek, and lowly, simple in heart, and of a single Eye, tender spirited, of a clean conversation, chast, and sober, of a broken Spirit, observing his waies, and circumspect in his walking, how lovely would this Christian, appear even in an evil World? How likely were a company of such Christians to recover the honour which others have lost to Religion in the World? Oh! let the honour of the Gospel move

move you, that the report of your faith may spread, and others may see that Religion is not an empty thing; and glorify God in the day of their visitation.

Obj. But you will say, are these things in our power? Can we create to our selves Doves Eyes? If not, why do you persuade us? And why do you not rather spend your time in praying to God for us?

Sol. I answer, that for the *habits of these graces* (the exercise of which I call to you for) they are the gift of God. The Creator gives the Dove its Eye, and the God of grace must create in men *Doves Eyes.* But yet,

1. *As to the outward exercise of these things* (some of them at least) *much lyes in a mans power, in the use of that Common grace, which the Lord denies to none, till by their abuse of it they have provoked him to deal so with them*; they may doubtless, restrain their hands, and tongues from acts of cruelty, revenge, and malice, their bodies from unchast acts, *&c.* it is true these acts as done by them cannot please God, because not done from a right Principle, to a right manner, nor to a right End nor are they able to mortify their inward lusts, but the outward acts are their duty, and would take off much of the reproach cast upon Religion.

2. For those who have received *the habits of regenerating grace*, 'tis true the Lord must excite them to action. And the Lord by the influence of his Spirit must also *assist us in the exercise* or *we shall do nothing*, but these are such influences of graces, as he. 1. *Grants to use*, in the use of our *indeavours.* And such influences. 2. as he (ordinarily) *doth not deny to his Children, putting forth themselves to what they can in the performance of their duty.* So that (asserting yet those great truths of God. That it is the Lord that gives to *will* and to *do.* The first by the infusion of the habit of the grace of regeneration, the second, by the influence of his grace upon his People, exciting those habits, to exercise, and assisting them in their exercise) yet there is room enough for exhortations of this Nature.

Sermon LVIII.

Canticles 1. 16.

Behold thou art fair (my Beloved) yea pleasant; also our Bed is green.

IT is generally agreed, that the person spoken to in this verse, is he who is in this Song represented under the notion of a *Beloved*, by which I have told you, that we understand the *Lord Jesus Christ*; and the person speaking is *she* whom he calls his *Love*, the *fairest amongst women*, &c. By her the *Caldee Paraphrast* all along understands the *Congregation of Israel*, which by that antient Interpreter is brought in thus speaking; *How beautiful is the glory of thy Holiness, while thou dwellest amongst us, and freely hearest our prayers; while thou abidest in our beloved Bed, our Children are multiplied upon the Earth, we increase and multiply, like a Tree planted by the Rivers of water, whose Leaf is beautiful, and its Fruit much.* But I have all along observed too great a fondness in that Reverend Interpreter, to apply all spoken in this Song to the Jewish Synagogue, because once she was the only Beloved of God, not attending this as a Prophecy, concerning also such as should be received into Divine favour, when God should have said to his Antient People, *Loammi*, you are not my People. We have therefore by the Spouse here all along understood *the Church of God* in all times, and more particularly, *believing Souls*, which are here brought in thus speaking to Christ; *Behold thou art fair my Beloved, yea pleasant: Also our Bed is green.* The words in our English Translation, are punctually translated: Nor is there any considerable difference amongst Interpreters, rendring them in their several Versions. We shall therefore fall immediately to consider the sense of the words, as they lie before us, which are a Reply unto what Christ had said, *v.* 15. He had told the believing Soul, that *she was fair, she was was fair, she had Doves Eyes.* She now replys in the words of the Text, *Behold thou art fair (my Beloved) yea pleasant; also our Bed is green.* Where you have,

1. Her usual friendly Compellation, דודי My Beloved, my Love,

Love, my Nephew, my Uncle, my Kinsman. I gave you an account of the significancy of that word before.

2. A note of *Attention* or *Admiration* הנה *Behold.* I shewed you in my Discourses on the 16th *verse;* the usage of that particle in Scripture.

3. A double Assertion; 1. *Thou art fair*; to which she adds, *yea pleasant,* יפה אף נעים 2. The second in those words, *Our Bed is green.*

He had told the Spouse, *v.* 16. that she *was fair*; she now replies, *Behold! thou art fair my Beloved; Pulchritudo ejus dilectio ejus* (saith *Bernard*) His love to his Spouse is his beauty, *Et ideo major quia præveniens*, which is so much the greater, because it prevents us. And (saith he) she therefore loves more, because she discerns her self prevented, and overcome in Love. It is as much as if she had said, *Doth my dearest Saviour say, I am fair, who am by Birth an* Ethiopian, *black with original corruption, and upon whom the Sun hath looked?* Nay, *My Beloved, thou art much more fair: Let the World be invited to behold thy Beauty; Behold thou art fair my Love.* Observe, *Bernardus ad loc.*

Prop. 1. *The Beauty of our Saviour doth infinitely transcend the Beauty of his Saints.*

Prop. 2. *The sense of the value which Christ puts upon his Saints, will, and ought to engage them to put an high value upon him.*

Give me leave to speak something to the first of these Propositions, before I pass on to the other words of the Text. I begin with the first.

Prop. 1. *Christ's Beauty doth infinitely transcend the Beauty of his Saints.* The Saints are Stars, and there is not the least Star, but hath its lustre and glory; but yet there is a difference of Stars in glory, and the glory of the *Sun of Righteousness*, of the *Star* that came out of *Jacob*, is far more eminent than the Beauty of other Stars, which are set in inferiour Orbs. *Pulchritudo est qualitas per quam aliquid pulchrum est.* Beauty is a quality from which any thing is made beautiful. That is beautiful which is *lovely. Pulcher quasi* פלאה *decus*, or *quod pollet charitate.* There is a corporeal Beauty, and there is a mental Beauty; the corporeal Beauty is nothing else besides a certain lovelinesse that ariseth from a due proportion of bodily parts, and due temperament of humours, and a comely bodily figure. The mental Beauty is a lovelinesse which ariseth from a well tempered Soul, adorned with good natural dispositions, moral habits, or spiritual *Martinius*, Psal. 45. 2. seems to favour this notion of Beauty.— *Thou art fairer than the Children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips.*

tual infused habits of Graces. When I speak of the Saints Beauty, and of Christ's Beauty, I understand it of a *spiritual loveliness* in them arising from that Grace which dwelled in Christ essentially, as God, and was poured out upon him without measure, as Mediator, and is derived from him to all that truly believe in him. Now I say, this Beauty in Christ doth infinitely transcend that of the Saints. I will shew it you in some few particulars, which you may gather from what I said before concerning the Saints Beauty. I shewed you that the Saints Beauty was not *native*, and *primitive*, but *derivative*, not *essential*, but *accidental*, not *perfect*, but *imperfect*. I told you that it was indeed *durable*, but yet the degrees of it might *fade*. Let me now open to you the transcendent Excellencies of Christ's Beauty.

1. And more generally: It is a glorious, *incomprehensible*, and most *incomparable Beauty*; *When the Word was made flesh, and came and dwelt amongst the Sons of men, they beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*, Joh. 1. 14. In all created Beauties, there is not equality: There are some faces more beautiful, and some minds more beautiful and lovely than others, which yet have their loveliness too. (Beauty is a quality which is capable of degrees.) There is a glory in Christ's Beauty, which is not to be found in the Beauty of any Saint. The Apostle tells us, that the *fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily*. And the Evangelist, that his glory *was like the glory of the only begotten Son of God*; *he was full of Grace and Truth*. Now, if you ask me what this glory is, what Tongue is able to express it? Every one sees a *glory* in the Sun's Light excelling the glory of the Stars; but wherein the Excellency is more than in the fulness of the Light, none is able to determine. Here it is true which the Vulgar Latine makes the sense of *Prov.* 25. 27. *Qui scrutatur Majestatem opprimetur à gloria*: While the Soul sets it self to fathom the transcendent Divine Excellencies that are in Christ, it is overcome with glory, as the Eye is with the Light of the Sun, that looks too wistly upon it; as the Boy that appeared to the Auncient, (who had promised his People to open to them the Doctrine of the Trinity,) unlading water out of the Sea into a little hole with a Spoon, and told him that he should sooner have done that work, than he would have opened the Doctrine of the Trinity: So I may say in this case: Christ is every way wonderful. The Prophet (concerning his Birth) cries out, *Who shall declare his Generation*? I may here cry out, *Who shall declare his glory*? Thus much we can say, that his Beauty is

Col. 2. 9.

Isa. 53. 8.

exten-

extensively and *intensively* more than that of the most eminent Saint in the World, that it is incomparable, and incomprehensible, but it is impossible fully to delineate his glory to you; yet something we may speak more particularly.

2. Therefore Christs Beauty is a *Primitive Beauty*. The Beauty of the most eminent Saint is no more than a derivative Beauty; we are *clean through Christ's cleanness*, and we are *comely through Christ's comeliness*. Take the Saint out of Christ he hath nothing in him but blackness, uglines, and deformity, all his Beauty is derived from Christ; he is but like the Star, that hath its Light from the Sun, being of it self but a thicker part of cœlestial matter; yea he is in a lower degree than a Star, which the Philosopher saith hath some (though a very small) Light of his own. The Child of God of himself is not only dark, but darkness: *You were once darkness* (saith the Apostle) *but now you are light in the Lord.* But now Christ is not only *lightsom*, but *light it self*: *I am the true Light*, *Joh.* 1. 9. *Joh.* 8. 12. Yea, and his Light, his Beauty is from himself. Consider him as God equal with the Father, and coævous with him; all the Divine Perfections were in him. The whole Beauty of the Godhead was in Christ. Consider him indeed as to his Humane Nature, so his Beauty was derivative; the Spirit was *given to him* (though *not by measure*) *Joh.* 3. 34 *Col.* 1. 19.) *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* But consider now the Lord Jesus Christ personally, as *God and Man*, and so all his Beauty was *Primitive*, and from himself: His Divine Nature being the Fountain of all Perfections, and his Humane Nature receiving the fulness of the Godhead from that Nature to which it was joyned, in the fellowship of the same Person. Now look what difference there is betwixt the Original Light of the Sun, and the borrowed Light of a Star, betwixt the Primitive Light of the Fire, and the Derivative Light of a Taper, such a transcendent difference there is between the Beauty of Christ, and the Beauty of a Christian.

Eph. 5. 8. John 1. 9. 8. 12. John 3. 34. Col. 1. 19.

3. Christ's Beauty is an *Essential Beauty*. When I discourse to you concerning the Beauty of Christians, I told you that their Beauty was *accidental* and *adventitious*; all those gracious dispositions which are found in the Souls of Saints, which make them lovely and beautiful, either in the Eyes of Christ, or of their Brethren, are but adventitious qualities, and accidents, no part of their Essence; But Christ's Beauty is *Essential* to him. It is certainly true, that there are no accidents in God; all that love, and goodness, and mercy

mercy, which is in Jesus Christ, that slowness to conceive a wrath, and readiness to forgive, it is all Essential unto him. -- *Essentia Divina identificat sibi omnia quæ sunt in Divinis* (say the Schoolmen) Christ is from his Essence wise, good, gracious, holy, *&c.* Now every ones Reason will easily apprehend a transcendent difference between Essential and Substantial Beauty, and Adventitious and Accidental Beauty. But

4. Christ's *Beauty* is a *spotless Beauty*; He is called the *Sun of Righteousness*. The Sun hath no spots in it, it is all beautiful, all glorious. The Saints Beauty is a *spotted Beauty*, or at least a Beauty attended with spots; it is like the Beauty of the Moon; the Moon is a glorious creature, but the Moon hath its spots. Take the fairest Saint in the World, he hath some blemishes, much grace, but some corruption, much rectitude, but some crookedness; yea, he is in nothing perfect. He *believeth*, but crieth out, *Lord help my unbelief*. He loveth God, this is his Beauty: Oh! but he wants some degrees of love, he bewails his want of love to God, and begs of God to teach him to love him; there's his spot in his Beauty. He doth direct his waies towards God; there's his Beauty: But he cries out, *Oh that my waies were directed to keep thy Statutes!* there's his spot, there's his deformity. But now look upon Christ, there was no spot found in him, no defect of Beauty, no mixture of deformity; no guile was found in his mouth, no deceit in his heart, no crookedness in his actions.

Psal. 119. 5.

5. *Christ's Beauty* is a *never fading Beauty*. I remember that I told you concerning the Beauty of the Saints, that it is a durable Beauty, it is never wholly lost, and it is true in the Eyes of Christ, but what's the reason? because the Providence of God continually upholds that state of Beauty which is once conferred: Nor hath God so ordered the upholding of the Saints Beauty, but that it may fade and decay as to degrees, yea and be wholly lost (as to humane Judgment.) 'Tis true, the *Beauty* of Justification can never be lost, can never decay, but the Beauty of Holiness may. Now, Holiness is a great part of the Saints Beauty, both in the Eyes of God, and also of men: But Christ's Beauty can never fade, the *Rose of Sharon* cannot wither; this is proved from the third thing. If Beauty could fail from Christ, the Divine Essence might be extinguished.

6. In the last place; Christs beauty is a *communicative Beauty*; The loveliest face in the World, cannot procreate such another,

ther, the most vertuous ingenuous mind, cannot communicate its vertue, and ingenuity so as to possess another Soul with it. You have many a Child of God, that is exceeding beautiful, both by *justifying*, and *regenerating grace*, but what they have is to themselves. The wisest Virgins can lend no Oil to the foolish; if they do, there will not be enough for them both. But now Christs Beauty is communicative, he is in himself comely, and he can put his comelines upon others, yea (which is more) he can communicate, without loss to himself, as the Fire gives heat to all in the Room, and yet hath no less heat in itself, or as the Sun inlightneth the Moon, and all the Stars, yea and all the World, and yet hath as much light still as it had before that communication. So doth the Lord Jesus Christ, he hath communicated Beauty to *ten thousand thousand Saints* even to all that have lived since *Adams* fall to this day. They were all comely *through his comelines put upon them*, yet hath he in himself the same Beauty he ever had. But I have spoke enough to the opening of this point. I come to the application in three or four words.

1. In the first place, *This calleth to all the Children of God*, for that great duty mentioned, Rom. 12. 3. *Not to think of himself more highly then he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* The want of this Spiritual Sobriety, hath been one great cause of the Drunkenness of this later age. Use 1. Rom. 12. 3.

2. *Professors have been too apt to think of themselves above others*, forgetting that of the Apostle in that Chap. v. 10. *In honour preferring one before another*; ah how vile have Brethren seemed in one anothers Eyes? How ready have the followers of *Paul* been to despise the followers of *Cephas*, and those that followed *Apollo* to despise those that followed *Paul*? How subject have we been to contemn those not of our own form, though possibly better Scholars in Christs School then we! (for Scholarship in Religion is not to be judged by forms in the Church?) Certainly it had been much better for those self conceited Christians, that looking upon their own beauty have so scorned others, as low, legal Christians, to have thought with themselves. Ah! but what is my Beauty to Christs Beauty? And why do I despise, who my self have not attained.

2. A 2d *sort of professors have erred by thinking of themselves above*

bove the measure of faith given to them. I know nothing hath contributed so much, to the miserable distempers of our Church as this, that our professors have looked their faces in a multiplying glass, there they have beheld their parts above what indeed they were, yea and their graces too. But alas (Friends) Suppose them what you would have them, there is no cause of glorying, for *if thou hast received it, why doest thou glory, as if thou hadst not received.* And let the parts and graces that make thee beautiful be what they will, certainly they are short of Christs still (who is thy great Example.)

3. But *most abominable are those, who dream that they are as holy as Christ, as perfect as he is,* yea that they are *Christed* and *Godded.* They may be *Devilled,* and *Sathanized,* with pride and self conceit, but certainly, when the Saint is grown to the highest pitch, Christ must be higher by the head, and shoulders. Did these *poor worms,* ever drink of that cup of which he drank? Or were they ever baptized with the Baptism wherewith he was baptized? If not, how come they to sit at his right hand? were they the onely begotten Sons of God, *full of grace and truth?* How then come they (if they were not so) to be sharers with him in his glory? Away then with this blasphemous pride; and if thou (O thou worm of the Earth!) knowest not how to difference Christs Beauty from thine, go to the Sun, and Moon, and Stars, and consider if the imperfect twinkling light of the latter bear any Proportion to the triumphing light of the former; go and learn, how the heat of thy hand (made hot by the Fire) can possibly be proportionable to the heat of the Fire, which gave thy hand what heat it hath. But no more of this. It is a thing not fit to be named amongst Christians. This is the first Use.

Use 2. In the 2d place; Let this Caution you against that which the Apostle *Jude* complains of, *Jude* 16. *Having mens persons in admiration.* Under the former branch of Application I took notice of one great cause, of the sad miscarriages of professors in our age; I shall here touch upon another, It is *This having mens persons in admiration,* Christians have had such a one in their Eye, whom they have looked upon as an holy and eminent person, full of Spiritual Beauty, and him they have followed over hedge and ditch, never looking at Christ all the way. It is good to behold the workings of Grace upon those who

who are made the subjects of it; but to what end? What? that we might admire them, and follow them? no, but that we might admire God in them, and that Grace of Christ by which they are so holy, so humble, so meek, so eminent in any Grace. I am afraid many have made another use of Professors seeming Beauty in these times, and the Lord hath let them see, that their *Beauty was vain*, and their appearing *Favour deceitful*. Certainly Brethren, if that which you have heard be true, Christ alone is to be admired by you; he is the chiefest of ten thousand. Do you hear any one saying, such a Minister, such a Christian is fair, O! he, or she is fair, they have Doves Eyes, look thou up to Heaven, and say, Nay, (my dear Saviour!) *thou art fair*; these are derivative Beauties, thine is a primitive Beauty; the Beauty of these is but an accidental, adventitious Beauty, thine is an essential, substantial Beauty; these are mixed Beauties, thine is a perfect Beauty. We have hearts that are exceeding carnal. Men are very prone to admire their fellows rather for *Outward Advantages, than for Spiritual Perfections*; more for outward parts, than for Grace; and when they take notice of Grace in any, to admire them rather than Christ for the Grace of God bestowed upon them. The Woman, *Luk.* 11. 27. was guilty of the first, that hearing Christ speak, lift up her voice and said, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked.* Christ reforms her wish, *v.* 28. yea rather, *Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.* The *Corinthians* were guilty of the second, who much admired those amongst them that had *parts, and extraordinary gifts:* The Apostle endeavours to reform that, 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. — *I shew unto you a more excellent way*; that was Grace. Grace is better than all the gifts in the World. Christians are also subject to a third Errour, where they see, or at least think they see eminent Grace in any, they are prone to admire them, and follow them. But Christians! I shew unto you a more excellent object; do you see eminent grace in any, admire Christ in them, and the eminency of Grace in Christ, who hath given them such a proportion. But let Christ still be greater in the Throne than the greatest Saint upon the Earth; admire him, and follow him. But that will be a third branch of Application.

What you have heard, methinks, should send you all away filled with the *admiration of Christ, panting with desires after Christ, and filled with the love of him.* Use 3.

1. I say first, *Filled with the admiration of Christ.* Have you at

any time seen an eminent Christian abounding with love to God, zeal for him, clothed with humility, buried in self-denial, adorned with any Graces which have made him acceptable to all with whom he hath conversed, and have you admired such a one, how he could abridge himself of the sweets and contentments of this life, and satisfie himself with being any thing, or nothing, so he might but attain to the Resurrection of the Dead, win Christ, be found in him, and win others to him? and will you not admire that Fountain from whence all these streams are derived? Is he a reasonable creature that gazeth upon a twinkling Star, and admires the lustre of it, and looks upon the Sun without any admiration at all. Oh! admire Christ, to whom all created Perfections are no more than so many drops of Water to the Ocean, so many grains of Sand to a Mountain, so many slender Beams to the body of Light in the Sun.

2. Shall not this send you away panting after *Union, and the seal of Union with Christ*? Man as a sensual creature, desires corporeal Beauty, and 'tis hard for him to see it in a Woman free for him, and not to desire her for it. Man as a rational creature desires *mental Beauty*, and it is hard for him to know of any adorned with moral Vertues, and with a pleasing and ingenuous disposition, and not to desire friendship and acquaintance with him or her that is so qualified. Man as regenerate and a spiritual new creature, desires spiritual Beauty; and 'tis ordinary for Christians, seeing others more eminent in Grace than themselves, to desire fellowship with them, and to be made partakers of their Grace. But lo here Christians, a beautiful Object excelling all created Beauties; Lo here one that is the fairest amongst the Sons of Men; Lo here one to whom all the *Lillies of the Field*, yea even *Solomon* himself in all his glory, was never like; shall not your hearts pant after Union with him? Shall none say, Oh that this Christ were mine, his Grace mine, his Beauty mine, his Glory mine! Shall not every Soul which hath had a glimpse of his Glory, desire *that he would kiss it with the kisses of his mouth*, that it might have further confirmations of its Interest in him?

3. And thirdly; Shall not all your hearts, who have this day heard of his Beauty, burn with further *love to him*? Doth the Womans heart leap when she hears her Husband magnified? Doth she pride her self in secret thoughts, saying, *This is my Beloved, This is my Husband*? and doth the commendation which others give him

blow

blow the Coals of Love in her heart, and make them burn unto a flame? Oh that this Discourse might have such an influence upon you this day! Have not your hearts burned within you, while I have discoursed in your Ears concerning Christ's loveliness? O go home now and love him more! But our Saviour hath said, *If you love me, keep my Commandments.*

4. Lastly; Therefore seeing that the *Beauty of Christ is so transcendent a Beauty*, let all the Children of God do that one thing, (which St. *Paul* saith he did) *viz. Not think that he hath attained*, but *forgetting that which is behind, press on forward to that which is before, unto the price of the High Calling.* Christ is our mark; we are to learn of him to be lowly, and meek, to be holy and separate from sin. Let no man therefore set up himself a stand short of this mark, and let every one see, that there is room for him yet to be more and more holy; thou mayest be as holy as thy Neighbour, but thou art not yet as holy as Christ; that's that thou shouldest study; that's it which thou shouldst labour after. But this is enough to have spoken to the first Observation. The second follow: That the sense of that *Value* and *Estimate* which *Jesus Christ puts upon our Souls, should make us put an high value upon him.* The Spouse's saying, *Thou art fair* (my Love!) *Thou art fair*, made her reply *Thou art fair my Beloved.*

Sermon LIX.

Cant. 1. 16.

--*Yea pleasant.*

IN my last Exercise I discoursed to you the transcendent Beauty of Christ above the creatures Beauty, which is but a Beam from that Sun, a Drop from that Fountain, the Shadow of that Substance. Our Spouse here adds, אף נעים yea pleasant; not only fair, but pleasant; not only יפה but נעים It is a word often made use of in Scripture, signifying (sometimes) that which gives satisfaction to the outward Senses; sometimes that which gives

satisfaction to the mind. You read of the *pleasant harp, Psal.* 81. 3. of *pleasant riches, Prov.* 24. 3. of the *sweet Psalmist,* 2 *Sam.* 23. 1. in all which Texts, this word is used: it sometimes denotes the *Satisfaction of the* mind in an object, thus it is said to be a *pleasant thing* to praise God, *Psal.* 135. 3. *Psal.* 147. 1. and a *pleasant thing* to *keep Gods Commandments, Prov.* 22. 18. and to see brethren dwelling together in unity; *Psal.* 133. 1. in all which Texts also this Word is used. The Spouse here useth the word by way of *auxesis* adding something to what she had said before; Thou art *fair*: Yea *pleasant.* The Proposition is plainly this:

Prop. *Jesus Christ is not only beautiful, but pleasant.*

I shall speak to this Proposition by way of *Explication,* and *Application.* By way of *Explication,* I shall enquire, *what is meant by pleasant?*

2. *How the Lord Jesus Christ is not only fair, but also pleasant?* I shall there subjoin the confirmation.

1. *Qu. What doth the Spouse mean, when she says Christ is pleasant?*

The word translated pleasant, is sometimes used to signify what is grateful to the sensual Eye, and so may be conceived *Synonymous,* to the term *fair,* but I conceive the Spouse here intendeth something more, (as I hinted to you before,) Amongst men, beauty properly relates to the complexion, *pleasantness* to the *conversation,* a man may be fair and yet not *pleasant,* he may have a fair face, and a false heart, a sweet countenance, and a sour Soul. But yet this difference will not serve us here. For Christs beauty is not a corporeal, sensual beauty, but an inward Spiritual beauty, and it is yet harder to distinguish, *fair,* and *pleasant,* as they relate to Christ: *Bernard* gives a double guess in the case — *Eminentiam decoris illâ repetitione designat. Aut certè in utrâque Christi substantiâ dignam expressit omni admiratione decorem: in alterâ naturâ, in alterâ gratiâ*: That is, the Spouse by this repetition signifies that eminency of beauty, which is in Christ, or else by this double term, signifieth the beauty of Christs two Natures; the first, *i.e.* His Divine Nature being beautiful by *Nature*; the second by *Grace:* Thou art fair considered as to thy Divine Nature, as thou wert from all eternity, existing in the form of God, God blessed for ever, the bright Character of thy Fathers substance, and

Bernard. super Cant. Ser. 45.

and the expreſs Image of his glory. *Yea pleaſant*, in thy form as a Servant, when thou didſt make thy ſelf of no reputation for my ſake, *&c. Gregory* agrees in the ſame Notion.

Pulcher & decorus dilectus dicitur qui in divinitate & humanitate omni amanti ſe menti ſinè maculâ reprehenſionis aſpicitur. Gregor. ad loc. Zech. 11. 10.

2. There are others, who by the *pleaſantneſs* (which the Spouſe here entituleth her Beloved unto) underſtand his pleaſant adminiſtration of his *Covenant, Doctrines*, reproofs, *&c.* indeed the Lords *ſtaff* (which denotes his Covenant) is called נעם Beauty. And *David* uſeth this word to expreſs the Satisfaction he took, in the Ordinances of God. *Pſal.* 27. 4. *Pſal.* 90. 17. And our own Annotations expound this Text by *Pſal.* 84. *v.* 1. The ſenſe then is this: *Thou art fair* (O *my Saviour!*) tranſcendently fair, and beautiful, adorned with all Grace. *Yea pleaſant*, in *all thy adminiſtrations, and dealings out of thy ſelf, in thine Ordinances*, thou art *pleaſant*. Thou ſweetly diſpenſeſt grace, (from the fountain which is in thee,) by the Ordinances of the Goſpel which are ſo many conduit pipes.

3. I ſhall offer you a third Notion of the term. As amongſt men, we may eaſily diſtinguiſh betwixt *beauty*, and *pleaſantneſs*, whether you take beauty, for the comelineſs of the outward man, or the Ornament of the inward man. A man or woman may have a ſweet complexion, a lovely Countenance, a beautiful perſonage, and yet have a debauched Soul, and ſo be far from pleaſantneſs, yea a man may have a *mental beauty*, and yet not pleaſant, no good Companion for ones life. There are many men who are wiſe, and juſt, and learned, and yet poſſibly, through pride, moroſity, or ſullenneſs, or reſervedneſs, not pleaſant: Pleaſantneſs doth much refer to the converſation: and if we allow this ſenſe of the *term*; by which (as our own Annotators obſerve) the Spouſe doth elegantly correct, and raiſe the ſenſe of what ſhe had before ſaid: Then this is that which the Spouſe ſaith: *My Dear Saviour, is not only beautiful in the Eye of my mind*, both *in reſpect of his Majeſty, and glory, and of that Grace, which was poured forth upon his lips, in reſpect of the eminent perfections, both of his Divine, and humane Nature*, but *he is alſo lovely, and amiable, and ſo I have found him in all his diſpenſations to me and alſo in all my converſe with him.* Thus it denoteth the pleaſantneſs of the Souls Communion with Chriſt, and may comprehend both his Communication of himſelf to the Souls of his People *in and through his Ordinances*, and alſo, his Communication of himſelf to them,

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by way of more immediate, Spiritual influences; and it importeth thus much, *That a Christians walking with God, is a pleasant walking*, you know that the life of a Child of God in Scripture is expressed under several Notions; it is sometimes called, *a walking with God.* It is said of *Enoch, he walked with God, Gen.* 5. 22. 24. the like of *Noah, Gen.* 6. 9. it is called, a walking *in Gods ways*: And *after Gods Commandments.* A *walking with Christ*, Col. 2. 6. A *walking in the Spirit, Gal.* 5. 16. 25. Christ is he who maintaineth, and influenceth, and upholdeth, a Christians life, he is the Companion of his life, now that which the Spouse asserts is, that Christ is not a sour Companion, to make use of the similitude of the Text. Many a Woman hath an Husband, who it may be is a comely Person, learned, sober, wise, but yet possibly of a morose reserved temper, or of a proud, and surly disposition, he is fair but he is not pleasant, Jesus Christ the Husband to a gracious heart, is not only beautiful, so as a Soul may please it self in beholding of him, and looking upon him, but he is also pleasant: all his dealings and converse with the Souls of his People are sweet, and delightful. And thus much may serve to have spoken to the first question, and for the more general explication of the term; the second follows, *viz.*

2. *Qu. How is the Lord Jesus Christ pleasant? And in what particulars doth his pleasantness appear?*

1. *Pleasantness implies a general sweetness, and loveliness in conversation,* 2 Sam. 1. 26. *I am distressed for thee, (my Brother* Jonathan*) very pleasant wert thou to me. David* apprehended a loveliness in his converse with *Jonathan*: as a man delights to be in the Company of his friend, and hath much Satisfaction in it, so it is with the gracious Soul. The life of a Christian is a pleasant life, because Christ is pleasant to it. I told you before that a Christian hath in this life a double converse with Christ.

1. *In Ordinances and duties.*

2. By the *immediate influences of his Spirit in all his conversation.* As to both Christ is pleasant.

1. It is a pleasant thing for the Soul of a Christian, to enjoy Christ in his Ordinances, *Psal.* 84. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts, my Soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord*: it is a pleasant thing to a Christian,

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to hear of Christ in a Sermon, to look up to Christ in Prayer: to praise the name of God. *David* upon this argument engageth the Children of God to praise him, for it is *pleasant*, *Psal.* 135. 3. *Psal.* 147. 1.

2. It is a *pleasant thing*, to a gracious Soul, *from the influences of the Spirit of grace to direct his life according to the rule of Gods Word.* As it was the meat and drink of our Saviour, to do the will of his Heavenly Father: so it is the meat of a disciple, of Christ to do the will of Christ especially when he findeth his Soul advantaged to it from the influences of the Spirit of Christ, *Rom.* 7. 22. *I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man.* Observe two things, St. *Paul* doth not say *I delight in the Love of God*; who could do otherwise then so? But *I delight in the Law of God*: an holy heart delights in the Law of God: but secondly, Observe the restriction, *as to the inward man.* This may prevent an objection. Will some poor Soul say, I cannot say that I delight in strictness, the Lord Pardon it to me, I even force my self upon any close walking: But dost thou not *delight in the Law of God as to thy inward man?* If thou dost, Christ is pleasant to thee, he is not pleasant to thy flesh, but he is pleasant to thy Spirit.

2. you will further understand how Christ is pleasant to the Soul, and receive a further confirmation of it, if you but consider, *what is requisite to make one pleasant*, as a pleasant Husband, or a pleasant Companion, of ones life, *&c.* I conceive there are three things.

1. *Some real positive worth.* A man or woman that hath no worth, is pleasant to none, but such as are fools, or fots, Christ hath an infinite worth in him, nay you will observe, that although a man have much worth in him, yet he is pleasant to none but such, as may have an advantage from his worth: the most learned man in the World hath no pleasantness in him, to the apprehension of a Clown, that is not in a capacity to partake of his worth: so that to make a man pleasant, he must not only have a real worth in him, but a worth of such a Nature, as he to whom he is pleasant may be advantaged; such is Christ, such are the excellencies of Christ.

2. To make a Person pleasant (besides a real worth,) there is required some *suitableness of nature, and disposition, to the party which so judgeth of him*: take now an eminently learned man

man in any science, though he hath a worth in him, and such a worth, as might to a novice be advantageous, yet all this doth not make him *pleasant* that which makes the Husband pleasant to the Wife, and the Superior pleasant to the inferiour, is some congruity of disposition. And such a congruity there is betwixt Christ and a believing Soul. Christ notwithstanding all that perfection of grace, and excellency which is in him, and notwithstanding, the aptitude, and fitness of his grace to the wants of a Soul, yet is not *pleasant* to a natural man: he is not beautiful to him, because he wanteth Spiritual Eyes to discern, he is not *pleasant* to him, because he wants that congruity of disposition which is necessary. Christ is holy, he is unholy. But now the believer is made *partaker of the Divine Nature*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. He is a *partaker of Christ*, *Heb.* 3. 14. And indeed hence ariseth, that particular pleasantness, which the believing Soul doth above any other Soul discern in Christ, even from that congruity.

3. To make any one, not only fair, but *pleasant*, *there will be required of him a Freedom from those things, which spoil all pleasantness in converse*, and a *presence and exercise of those dispositions, which are in themselves grateful to humane Nature.* I will instance in two or three, and shew you how Christ is freed from the former and possessed of the latter.

1. The pleasant man must not be *reserved*, but *Communicative*. A man that is of a reserved close temper, may be a worthy Person and have much real worth in him, but yet he is not pleasant: it is the Communicative man, who is the pleasant man. Christ (upon this account) is pleasant, he is not reserved from the Souls of his Saints. Look now as it is with a man, if he be one that hath real worth and abilities to do good to his friend, and of a free temper, that if his friend speaks to him he presently hears and answers, if he asks him a question, he presently resolves, this man now is a pleasant man. Christ is pleasant, as he is furnished with a sufficiency of power, and ability, for the comforting, resolving, advantaging his Peoples Souls any way, so he is not reserved from them. How free, was he with his disciples while he was upon the Earth, how ready if they doubted to resolve them, if they asked any thing of him to answer them, if he saw them troubled to resolve them, &c. Christ hath removed the place of his residence,

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but he hath not changed his disposition. How free is Christ still with the Souls of his People? How ordinarily doth he resolve their doubts, speak peace to their Souls, answer their Prayers? Doth any Soul object against this in the words of *David*, *Psal.* 22. 3. *I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not, and in the night time I am not silent*? That Soul should do well to inquire, whether some reservedness found in it towards Christ, hath not caused Christ's reservedness to it; whether he doth not restrain *Faith*. He should do well also to enquire, whether he be not mistaken. Christ oft-times gives Answers which we do not understand. Finally; Let him *wait*, and he will see that Christ reserves himself only that he might hereafter be more pleasant to the Soul. But this is enough to have spoken to this first particular.

2. He that is *pleasant*, is not *morose*, but *courteous*; a man may be communicative enough, and yet not *pleasant*; he that is of a churlish, dogged temper, morose in all his behaviour, is never pleasant: He that is of a gentle behaviour, is pleasant. Oh how *gentle* is the Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly he deals with his Peoples Souls! *A bruised Reed he will not break, a smoaking Flax he will not quench*, Mat. 12. 20. It was prophesied of him of old, *Isa.* 40. *v.* 11. *that he should gather the Lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young*. If he speaks to a poor laden sinner, mark how tenderly he speaks, *Mat.* 11. 29. *Come unto me you that are weary and heavy laden, and I will ease you*. I appeal to the Souls of you that fear God, Hath not Christ dealt tenderly with you? Hath he pleaded against you with his great Power? Have you at any time found him churlish to your Souls? Nay, who is there amongst you but hath admired his expressions in his Word, and the manner of his dispensations unto your Souls? and can (from experience) say, *He is pleasant*. If any Soul from its own experience object against this Notion, I shall only advise it to consider, *whether it hath not put a false interpretation upon Christ's dispensations to it*: Or secondly, To distinguish betwixt *Christ's ordinary dealings with the Souls of the People, and his carriage to it, upon some eminent provocations*.

3. A third thing *which makes a man pleasant, is humility*. The proud person is grateful to none, no not to him who is as proud as himself, but he who is full of humility, of a condescending spirit, &c. is ordinarily pleasant to his Companion. Upon this account also *Christ is pleasant*; he condescendeth to us who are of *low degree*.

Nothing more indears a Person of Honour, and makes him pleasant to his Companion, than when there is discerned in him a readiness to stoop and be serviceable to those who are beneath him: Oh how pleasant is Christ upon this score to every honest heart! From the time that he *Nothing'd* himself, and humbled himself to a death upon the Cross, unto this day, he hath been, and still is thus *pleasant* to every gracious Soul. Every dispensation of special grace makes him thus more and more pleasant to his Peoples Souls. But I have spoken enough to the Doctrinal part. I come now to the Application.

Use 1. By way of Inference in the first place, let me conclude from *hence, That a Christian's Life must needs be a pleasant Life. To me,* saith St. *Paul, to live is Christ,* Phil. 1. 21. And again, *Col.* 3. 3. *Our life is hid with Christ in God.* A Believer lives from Christ, *Eph.* 2. *v.* 1. *You hath he quickened,* and he *lives in Christ,* and Christ lives in him. Now *Christ is pleasant.* Hearken to our Sponse in this Song, *chap.* 2. 3. *I sate down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* It is one great discouragement that keeps off men from following the Lord Jesus Christ: They have taken up a fancy, that *Christ is an hard Master; reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strawed.* They fancy the life of a Christian a moping life, burthened with cares, troubled with sorrows, &c. and think all their friends good dayes are gone when once they turn Puritans, and begin to follow after God. And in very deed then, and not before, do they begin to live, and to understand what true contentment is. Oh! let not this prejudice take hold of any of your Souls; come but taste and see how good the Lord is. Might but this prevail with any of you to embrace the offers of Christ, and to fall in with the wayes of God, let my Soul go for yours, if when once you have truly experienced the Contentment of a Christian's life, you do not with *David* chuse to be a Door-keeper in the House of God, rather than to dwell in the Tents of wickedness, if you prefer not one day in the Lord's Courts before a thousand elsewhere. Let not the deceitful pleasures of the World seduce you. If the Earth affords any satisfaction, that Soul hath it that walks with God, and hath a fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. By way of Argument, let me but plead with you,

1. To observe *the difference between sensual and intellectual pleasures:* And again, betwixt *rational and spiritual pleasures.* Who is there

there that observes not how much the satisfaction of the mind, in the possession of Learning and Vertue, excels all that satisfaction which the Eye hath in seeing, or the Ear in hearing? Christ is pleasant to the Soul, not to the outward, but to the inward man. The pleasures of the mind are *rational* or *spiritual*. The proportion which knowledge beareth to the understanding of man, and which moral Vertue bears to his Reason, makes them pleasant, and creates an intellectual rational pleasure. But alas! it must be imperfect; for as the Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing, so neither is it possible that the Soul should be satisfied with knowledge, or moral accomplishments, especially when it is awakened to consider Eternity. Hence the Learned man, that before took pleasure in his knowledge, being awakened, cries out, I with my Learning may go to Hell, when one that knows much less may go to Heaven; where's the pleasure? But now the Soul that is possessed of Christ, hath its heart perfectly at rest, because it sees its eternal Interest provided for, and cannot discern it self in danger of future misery. Furthermore, the things in which it takes pleasure, are above the rank of all sublunary contentments, even such things as *Eye hath not seen, nor hath Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of man to conceive.* Besides, *Conscience is quiet.* Conscience is that which spoils much of the Worlds pleasure; for as a *good Conscience is a continual feast*, so an *evil Conscience* is (more or less) a continual torment. Now *Christ* is he alone that quieteth the Conscience. Many a poor Christless Soul drinks Wine in Bowls, and boast in their outwardly happy condition, but by and by a finger of a mans hand appears; their Conscience begins to stir, and to tell them they are damned undone sinners; what becomes of their pleasure? But now the Soul that is in Christ, his Conscience speaks peace to him, he hath peace without trouble. And to give you a demonstration of this pleasantness of a Christian's life, as I remember Christ said of the *Lillies, they neither spin, nor sow, yet* Solomon *in all his glory is not like one of them*: So give me leave to say; Step unto the poor Cottages of Christians, who have scarce Bread to eat, no Silken Rayments to put on, no Musick to make them merry, no Money to spend, no Orchards or Gardens to delight them; and yet there's many a Nobleman, many a Gentleman who have all these in abundance, & yet in all their glory are not like one of these Lillies; these poor Souls have more true content and pleasure in one day, than they have in all their life, nor would they change conditions with

them: So true is that of *Solomon*, *Prov.* 15. 16, 17. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great Treasures, and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of Herbs where love is, than a stalled Oxe, and hatred therewith.* I dare warrant you, that the Philosopher could have dined more sweetly at home with Bread and Water, than at the Tyrants Table of Dainties in view of a sharp Sword hanging over his head by a thred. There's many a poor Christian in this like a true spiritual *Diogenes*, that satisfieth himself with the influence of the Sun upon his Tub, better than an *Alexander* could do himself with a whole World subdued to his feet.

Use 2. 2. *Observe from hence the difference between Christ and lusts, Christ and the World.* The Soul of man cannot be alone, it is either espoused to *lusts*, and to the *World*, or else to the *Lord Jesus*. There's many a one whose Soul is united to it's *lusts*. *Lust* is its beloved. Can this Soul say, *Behold thou art fair my Beloved, yea pleasant*? Doubtless nothing less. Reason tells the Drunkard, that his Drunkenness is a foul thing, and Reason tells the Unclean person, that his Soul is united to a filthy thing. Take him that is united to the World, to the Riches of it, or to the Honours of it, Reason tells him they have no beauty in them; nor are they more pleasant than beautiful. Ah! what racks of Conscience have prophane sinners oftimes? The Wine tickles the throat as it passeth, but it maketh the stomach sick: The lusts of the flesh leave a Thorn in the Conscience, which abides, when the pleasure of them is vanished. The World pleaseth the Eye, while the figure of it passeth before it, but it is no more than πολλὴ φαντασία, a great fancy, and *vexation of spirit*, spoils the pleasure of it. But Christ is pleasant; never any Soul that followed him, repented of it; yea those that follow him weeping, never repent of their repentings. Bring me that Soul which ever said I would I had never known, or never walkt with Christ.

Use 3. Let this therefore prevail with every Soul that hears me this day, *to get acquaintance with Christ*; And 2. *With those who have interest in him, to labour to grow up in him.* 1. The former; *Because he is pleasant.* 2. The latter; *Because they have not tasted* the bottom of that *pleasantness which attends him, and the full Enjoyment of him.* Pleasantness is an alluring thing. When *Eve* saw that the Apple was *pleasant to the Eye*, she took it, *Gen.* 3. 6. When *Issachar* (in *Jacob's* Prophecy, *Gen.* 49. 15.) saw *that the Land was pleasant, he bowed his shoulder to bear.* Were you but possessed of this one Truth, that Christ is pleasant, that the way of Christ is a way

of

of pleasantness, it would go a great way to perswade men into it. Hearken to the Wise man speaking of Wisdom, (of Christ indeed, and his Grace under the notion of Wisdom) *Prov.* 3.17. *Her waies are waies of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her.* Hearken you *that are at ease in Zion,* that drink away care, and spend your time in singing away the Evil day, *you that lie upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch your selves upon Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and Calves out of the midst of the stall; you that chant to the sound of the Viol, and invent to your selves Instruments of Musick; you that drink Wine in Bowls, and fare deliciously every day,* and dress your selves in gorgeous Apparel, I tell you, there's many a poor Soul that hath Christ, and is clothed with Rags, and feeds upon Roots, and drinks Water, whose Soul is more at ease, and enjoys more pleasure than yours doth. O! therefore return you *Shulamites,* return, and understand aright the waies of true pleasure from those things that are meer empty shadows of vanity. 2. Let this engage you that have *received Christ, to grow up in him,* to study him more, to converse with him more, to keep to closer communion with Christ; you yet know not the pleasantness that is in him; there is a breadth of sweetness, you have not measured, and a depth of pleasure which you have not fathomed.

In the last place; *Is Christ not only fair, but pleasant?* not only beautiful through *Grace,* but *pleasant, lovely, gentle, sweet* in his converse with the Souls of his Saints? *Let this commend pleasantness to every true Christian.* Labour not only to be *gracious,* but to be *pleasant.* I will name but two Arguments in the case. Use 4.

1. Consider, *Thus you shall be like unto the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. *Thus shall you honour your Profession.* An unpleasant Conversation in a Christian dishonours the Lord Christ; it makes men think that he is an hard Master, that Christianity is an odd thing, which metamorphoseth men and women into strange kind of creatures, unfit any longer for converse with the World. Take off this scandal from the Gospel: You may be pleasant, yet not profane; your conversation toward the World may be winning, though you do not give your selves up to such a liberty, as to hazard the ruine and loss of your own Souls. It was a piece of *Paul's* pleasantness; *He became all things to all men, that he might win some,* 1 Cor. 9. 22. 2 Cor. 10. 33.

Sermon.

Sermon LX.

Canticles 1. 16.

—Our Bed is Green.

I Am come to the Second Proposition of the Text, in those words, *Our bed is Green.* The Chaldee Paraphrast making the Congregation of *Israel* the Spouse in this Song, thus glosseth upon these words, *In the time, when thou dwellest in our Beloved Bed, our Children are many, and multiplyed upon the Earth, we grow, and multiply, like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Waters, whose leaf is beautiful, and whose fruit is much.* Possibly that antient Interpretation hath led the generality of Interpreters to expound the Text concerning the flourishing condition of the Soul, and of the Church, while it is in Spiritual conjunction with the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not *My Bed*, but *Our Bed*, is Green, and *flourishing*, for so the word may be translated. So that not to enlarge in further discourses about the Exposition of the Text, taking it for granted that the Holy Ghost in this Text respecteth the Bed, as it is the place for procreation, or as it was the place where they did eat their meat in those Countries, we may from it observe this plain Proposition.

Prop. *That the fruitfulness of the Soul, and of the Church, doth depend upon Christ's conjunction with them.*

I shall speak to this Proposition by way of *Explication, confirmation*, and *Application*. By way of *Explication*, we will only enquire what is the gracious Souls fruitfulness, or the Gospel Churches fruitfulness.

1. The particular *Souls fruitfulness lyes in its bringing forth of good works.* You read in Scripture of the *fruit of the Body.* Deut. 28. 4. And of the *fruit of the Land*, Deut. 7. 13. The Children of God, are said to be *Married unto Christ.* And as the *fruit of the Womb* is the consequent of carnall Marriage, so

Deut. 28. 4. 7. 13.

so the *fruit of holiness* is the consequent of Spiritual Marriage, *Rom.* 7. 4. *You are become dead to the law by the Body of Christ, that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* This fruit unto God is called *fruit unto holiness*, *Rom.* 6. 22. Christ is also compared unto a *vine*, *John* 15. 2. We are the *Branches*, and therefore purged that we may bring *forth fruit*, ib. 5. 16. Whether therefore the gracious Soul be looked upon as the *Spouse of Christ, and Married to him, by faith*, its fruit is holiness, or whether it be looked upon as a *branch in Christ*, still its *fruit is holiness*; our works (considering us as men) are our fruit. Now look, as several Plants, according to their different natures bring forth different fruit, some bring forth pleasant, some bitter fruit, some wholsom, some again noxious fruit: so it is with men and women, who are the *Plants of the World*; by Nature they are all wild Plants, and are corrupt, and bring forth corrupt fruit, called by the Apostle, the fruit of sin unto death: But having a new Nature given them by God, they bring forth fruit unto life, the fruits of righteousness, which are also called the *fruits of the Spirit*, *Eph.* 5. 9. *Gal.* 5. 22. the fruit of *righteousness*, to shew the *species*, or kind of them, fruit *unto life*, shewing the consequent of them, the *fruits of the Spirit*, shewing the more external cause of them: Now as these fruits more or less abound in the Soul, the Soul is more or less fruitful. This is the particular Saints fruit. Rom. 7. 4. John 15. 2. 5. 6. Rom. 6. 22. Eph. 5. 9. Gal. 5. 22.

2. The *Churches fruitfulness* is its bringing forth *many Sons unto God*. Children are the *fruit of the body*, caused by generation. Gods Children are the fruit of the Church, caused by *Regeneration*; Conversion is called a begetting, 2 Pet. 1. 3. We are said to be *begotten of God*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 1. God is our Father, but the Church is our Mother: It is the Church which bears us, which travels, and brings forth Children unto God: And the Saints are called the Churches Children, Isa. 54. 13. *All thy Children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy Children.* The thriving of the Church lies in this when many Souls are in it converted, and brought home unto God. This is the Souls fruitfulness and thriving, and this is also the Churches fruitfulness, and thriving. This is that which my Doctrine speaketh of and saith, that it dependeth upon Christs *conjunc-* 2 Pet. 1. 3. Isa. 54. 13.

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tion with the Soul and with the Church. Look as the fruitfulness of the Woman depends upon the conjunction of her Husband with her, as the fruitfulness of the plant depends upon its conjunction with the Earth; as the thriving of the Body by its meat, dependeth upon the blessing of God. *Man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God*: And as the thriving of the plant dependeth upon the influence of the Heavens, the shinings of the Sun, and the distillations of the Clouds; so, yea much more then so, doth the thriving of a *Church and of a Soul*, depend upon the influence of Christs grace. I will prove it first *concerning the particular Soul.* 2. Concerning the Church, 1. *Concerning the particular Soul.*

1. It is Christ that *giveth the Soul a prolifick vertue.* The fruitful Woman must have a prolifick vertue, so must the plant of the field, otherwise the Woman is barren, and the plant is barren. That power which is in any Soul, to *bring forth the fruit of holiness*, that is its prolifick vertue, and this is from the Lord; this is that which the Apostle calleth *to will* in *Philip.* 2. 13. *The will is the root of all humane actions*, and the power in the Soul to do them lies in its ability to will them. This is from the Lord, yea and from the Lord in a way of special providence too. The God of Nature hath put into the creature a prolifick vertue that (supposing the particular concurrence of Ordinary Providence) the woman brings forth the fruit of the Body, in a Natural course. And so concerning the plants of the field, (supposing the concurrence of Ordinary Providence) the plant brings forth fruit in its kind. But it is not thus with men, and women, as to the fruit of grace and of holiness. It was thus indeed with *Adam*; *Adam* in the day of his creation (as to the fruit of holiness) was like the plant of the field, indued with a prolifick vertue, he had not only Natural faculties, understanding, will, *&c.* but he had a power, and disposition in these faculties, to that which was good, this was connatural to him in the day of his creation, but as it is with the woman, created at first with this prolifick vertue, yet by accident this or that particular woman, may want it, and so is *barren*: So it is with all the Children of *Adam*, though in him created in *statu integro*, with

Phil. 2. 13.

a *posse velle*, a power to will that which is well pleasing in the sight of God, yet by that sad accident of the first mans transgression we are all become barren, and without any power *to will* that which is good. A will indeed is left to us, but an indisposition in that will unto that which is good; we are *reprobate unto every good work*. And that not only, by wicked works, as men are by them hardened in sin, and accustomed to Evil (and custom we say is a second Nature,) but even by Nature we are so. Now it is from Christ, that the Soul hath its first power, and ability so much as to move to a good action, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not of our selves sufficient to think one good thought*, Eph. 2. 5. *When we were dead in sin, he hath quickened us together by Christ*. Life is the Principle of all operation, we are by Nature *dead*, it is the Lord that quickeneth us. Look as the Child moves not till it be *quickened*, so neither doth the Soul move unto any thing that is good until grace at first quickeneth it.

2. As Christ gives the prolifick vertue to the Soul, *so it is he also that doth excite this vertue to act*. God hath given unto the plant a *prolifick vertue* from whence it is that it brings forth fruit; God hath given Bread-Corn a Power, and faculty to nourish the Body, and it is from hence that it nourisheth, but withal God by a *daily Providence* doth both uphold the faculties of the plant, and of the bread, and excite them to their exercise, otherwise neither would the bread nourish, nor the plant bring forth its fruit in its season. So it is with the Soul. Supposing the Soul possessed, of a power to will that which is good, (the will being renewed through grace) yet it is God that excites this power, Phil. 2. 13. *He giveth to do*. Not only to will, but also to do. And indeed this must be granted, or else grace shall have the least share in any good action that is done by us, for the Act is more Noble then a meer Power. It is Christ that gives a Power to will, and it is Christ that gives the Act of willing, disposing and quickening the Soul to the exercise of the Power which himself hath bestowed upon it. For let us consider whence it should come: The Lord in the change of the heart, doth not change the *Nature of man*, but man hath a liberty in his will, I mean a *liberty opposed to coaction*, his will is not compelled to that which is good; he hath indeed a power, but not compelling him: now when the will of man is in that state that he

can will that which is good, or that which is evil, tell me what is it which inclineth him to the one rather then the other, save only the influence of Divine grace.

3. Nay, Thirdly, *It is Christ that must assist in every good action*; not only excite to it, but *assist in it, or it will never be perfected.* Even in natural productions, besides the prolifick vertue, which the fruitful woman must have, and must be supposed to her conception of a Child in her womb; and besides the influence of Providence, which must be supposed to excite this vertue, which first causeth the conception (as to the Divine causation) there must also be a daily influence, and concurse of Providence, preserving and upholding the womans natural faculties, *&c.* or she miscarrieth, and the fruit of her body thriveth not; and as it is with a Plant, notwithstanding its prolifick vertue, and the influence of Providence exciting this vertue in the Spring time to put forth it self, there must be a daily influence of Providence upholding the natural vertues of the Plant, and assisting them to the perfecting of the fruit, and without this, though the Plant hath such a vertue, and hath put it out, yet the fruit dwindleth away, and comes to nothing: So it is with a Soul: Supposing the Soul quickened, born again, disposed unto that which is good; and supposing it to have begun a good action, yet without the continuance of the same grace with the Soul, and in the Soul, it brings nothing to perfection. Hence *Heb.* 12. 2. Christ is said to be *the Author and Finisher of our Faith.* Hence saith St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live, but yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.* And 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. Saint *Paul* saith, *He laboured, yet not he, but the grace of God which was with me.* To be short then; To a particular Soul's fruitfulness in good works, there is required, 1. *The Grace of God upon the Soul*, giving it a power to act. 2. *The Grace of God in the Soul, exciting it to its spiritual operations.* 3. *The Grace of God with the Soul, assisting it in its operations.* This not supposed, the Soul either wants a power *to will*, or wants a power *to move, to do*, &c. The Reason of this lies not only in that general necessary influx upon the creature, which is necessary to all its motions and actions, and which God hath reserved to himself, to grant or withhold as he pleaseth. But in this, that through the Fall of *Adam*, the Nature of Man is so

lapsed,

lapsed, that it requireth a more particular eminent influx of Providence upon it, to inable it unto that which is spiritually good, its *spiritually prolifick vertue*, being by the fall quite extinct, and the Soul of every man and woman *dead in trespasses and sins*. But thus much shall serve for the first. I come to the second, to prove it.

2. *Concerning the Church*; That *neither can it be fruitful without conjunction with Christ*. I told you, that the fruitfulness of the Church lies in its bringing forth many Sons unto God. The more Souls are converted, the more fruitful the Church is; but without Christ's conjunction with it, it bringeth forth none. If Christ's *presence* be in his Church, it brings forth many Souls. If he be not present, it *brings forth no Children*. This will easily appear by considering how the Church of God is Instrumental to the conversion of Souls; and by making it appear to you that these causes are not *principally efficient sole causes*; nor can be so, but are only instrumental causes. 2. That *upon experience it is made evident*, that where *Christ doth not concur*, they do nothing. For the first,

1. The Church is to be considered as to *its parts*, and as *to its priviledges*; as to *what God hath planted* in it, and what *God hath betrusted to it*.

As to its parts; So it is made up of *Officers*, and *members*. As to its *priviledges*, so there is committed to it the *Oracles of God*; the *Mysteries of God*; the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*: there is none of all these, but have or may have, (for ought I know) an *instrumental causation*, in bringing forth Children unto God, or in bringing of them up, but none of them have a *Principal efficiency*, none of them have a *sole efficiency*, nor can produce the effect without Christs conjunction; let us look upon them severally.

1. *Look first upon the Officers of the Church*: these were *extraordinary*, such as *Apostles Evangelists Prophets*: Ordinary, *Pastors*, and *Teachers*. That these have an instrumental causation, in the conversion of Souls is plain, they were set in the Church, *for the perfecting of the Saints*, Eph. 4. 12. for the perfecting their number, and for the perfecting of their graces, *Paul* calls them Fathers, 1 Cor. 4. 15. and saith he *begat* the *Corinthians*. He saith the same of *Onesimus*: but alas, as the Apostles of old, so Ministers now, have no more then an *instrumen-*

tality in this production: *Paul planted*, and *Apollos watered*, but *God gave the increase*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 6. God was all, *he that planted nothing*, he that *watered was nothing*, but God that gave the increase was all, *v.* 7. *v.* 9: They are but *waterers together with God*, workers *together with him*. Hence though *Paul* Preached the same Doctrine to all, yet he was to some, the *savour of life unto life*, to others, the *savour of death unto death*. And though his earnest desire was to convert his own Nation, it was his hearts *desire*, and *Prayer to God that they might be saved*, *Rom.* 10. 1. yet he could not effect it. And if the Officers of the Church, who are under a special ordination of God for the great end of conversion, could do no more, it will easily be granted of private members, whose indeavours in quickening others, though they may be sometimes blessed, of God to such an end, yet doubtless are not more efficient to it then the labours of Ministers, nor yet in an equal tendency with their's unto so great an end.

2. *As to the priviledges granted to the Church.* The *Oracles of God*, are committed to the Church, *Rom.* 3. 2. *it is the pillar and ground of truth*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. the *mysteries* of God are committed to it, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are Committed to it. Mat.* 16. 19. I understand ever by the first term, the *Word of God*, and the dispensation of it in the Preaching of the Gospel: by the second, the *Sacraments of the Gospel*, by the third, the *Censures of the Church*. I know the terms are more generical, and not so to be restrained (I only for distinction sake so restrain them at present) nor do I meddle here with the disputes, whether the dispensation of these or any of these, belong to the whole Church, or only to Officers, nor yet to which of the Officers: I shall only assert two things.

1. *That the Scripture seemeth to assign to all these, some instrumentality as to the bringing forth of Children unto God*: this is plain. 1. Concerning the *Word*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 15. *I have begotten you through the Gospel*, James 1. 18. *of his own will begat he us by the word of truth*: As to the Sacraments, for the Sacrament of *Baptism*, we are said to be *Baptized* into Christ, *Rom.* 6. 3. *Gal.* 3. 27. and again, *Acts* 2. 38. *to be Baptized* for the *Remission of sins*. For the Sacrament of the Lords Supper; though I dare not assert it a *converting Ordinance* yet unquestionably

questionably it hath its instrumentality to the Salvation of Souls. For *Censures* they have also their *instrumentality*, 1 Cor. 5, 5. the end of their administration is *for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of Christ*. But now.

2. It is as plain, *that they have but an instrumental causation*, and separated from *the influences of Christ, and his concurrence with them; they do nothing*, hence, *James* 2. 18. *of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*, *John* 1. 13. we are born again not of *blood*, nor *of the will of the flesh*: nor *of the will of man*: but *of the will of God*, John 3. 5. *except you be born again*, of *water and of the Spirit you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*. Thus the truth is evidenced from Scripture. And Scriptural reason.

2. In the second place? *Consider all experience, where-ever the Word of God hath been Preached, the Sacraments administred, Church Censures duly executed, so long as Christ hath granted his presence with the administrations; they have been made mighty in order to the bringing home of Souls unto God*. Where the Lord hath withdrawn his presence, either as to the generality of Persons under the external administrations or as to any particular Souls they have signified nothing. *Isaiah* doth but make the *heart of the People fat, and their Ears heavy*, and *shuts their Eyes*, *Ch.* 6. 10. he complains, that *he laboureth in vain and spendeth his strength for nothing and in vain. Saint* Pauls *Gospel is to the Jews a stumbling block*, and to the Gentiles foolishness, 3000 are converted at St. *Peters* Sermon, while Christ is in his Bed with his Church, but few or none, of the Jews in their Synagogues, *Acts* 19. they were *hardened*. Christ was gone out of his Bed, and it was now no longer *green* and flourished no more. But this is enough to have spoken as to the proof of the Doctrine, come we now to the Application.

The Proposition might be applied variously.

1. For the confutation of the errors of those who either deny the necessity, of any conjunction of Christ with the Soul, as to the production of the fruits of grace, or at least of such a conjunction, as is unquestionably necessary; and of those who think, that there is a power in mans will, *ad bonum Spirituale*, to produce that which is Spiritually good, and that a *moral suasion* is sufficient to the conversion of a Soul.

2. We might from hence observe the reason, why the *Word*

and Ordinances of God are so ineffectual as to some, however effectual unto others, but I have not time to enlarge so far. I shall therefore close up all with one Branch of Application, ---

Use Beseeching every Soul that heareth me this day to labour, that *Christ may yet be kept in his Bed, in our Bed.* The Bed is the resting place, while Christ remaineth and resteth amongst his People, *The Bed is green.* The Soul in which Christ resteth, is a flourishing Soul, the Church in which Christ resteth, and in which he dwells, is a flourishing Church: whiles he walketh in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, they are full of light. If he withdraweth himself their light will be darkness. Give me leave a little to improve this argument with you to the quickening up of your indeavours to the utmost, for the keeping of Christ in our Bed. I am the rather ingaged to it from the fears, that the experiences of late years, and the present juncture of affairs have created in me, that Christ is risen up out of *his Bed amongst us.* It was said of old, That when the Church had wooden Challices, she had golden Priests; but after she came to, golden Challices, she had wooden Priests, I cannot say so for our late times. The Church of God amongst us hath had golden Priests, I believe there was no Nation under Heaven, that in such a space of time enjoyed more of the Ordinances of God, more able Preachers, more powerful and Spiritual administrations. The *Bed hath been lovely*: or the Bedstead rather, hath been so, but hath it been flourishing? how few Children have been all this time brought forth, unto God? The Lord help us. Thousands have been perverted but how few have been converted? Thousands carried off from the waies of God not so many tens brought into Christ? Where are the Souls have been convinced of sin, or converted to Christ? The conversion of our daies hath been to opinions, and factions, not to Jesus Christ. Yet blessed be God it hath fared with us as with trees withering, which bring forth some small proportions of fruit, though dwindling, as to the proportion, and not in so great plenty as formerly, but I am afraid we are yet growing worse and worse, sure I am if the Lord withdraws his presence from his Ordinances, it must be so, seeing you may see, and not perceive, hearing you may hear, and not understand. Me-thinks I see our Saviour (though now exalted at the right hand

hand of his Father) weeping over *England*, (as once over *Hierusalem*) and saying, O *England*! *England*! thou that hast despised the Ordinances of God, and despised those that have been sent unto thee: *how often would I have gathered thee, as an hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings: but thou would'st not. Behold my house shall now be left desolate.* You may have Ministers, and you may have Ordinances, but you shall not see me henceforth till you say, *blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* The pulse of the Spirit in Ordinances, hath for many years, beaten faintly, now and then a stroke (like the pulse of a dying man) I am afraid lest the last stroke should be nigh at hand. Where's the power, and presence of God in our assemblies? Where's the taking of Heaven by force, which former times experienced? Oh that the consideration of the uncomfortableness of a desolate sanctuary, or dead Ordinances in an open sanctuary, might awaken you while yet you have hope to do what in you lies that Christ may be kept in his bed with you: it is true, the wind blows where it listeth, and who can command the breathings of it? But yet, let there be nothing wanting in your indeavours, That if God shall measure out such a dispensation, your Consciences may not rebuke you, as wilful occasioners of it. To this end give me leave to advise,

1. That you do not first *go out of the bed from him.* The Prophet told the King, *that God would be with him* and his People, *if they were with God.* God is not ready to rise up from his Bed of Love, he never forsook a People that kept close to him. The Jews would not be gathered, then Christ hid the things from them that concerned their peace. Christ in the last day of the feast cried. *You would not come to me that you might have life.* First they would not, then he would not, you have had a Gospel feast, possibly this may be the last day of it; this day Christ cries to you: Oh let him not go away with this dreadful word, you *will not come to me that you may have life.* Take heed of despising Ordinances, of slighting Christ and the means of grace: *Take heed of shunning Christs Bed.* How many are there that shy the Bedstead, refuse the Sanctuary, how dreadfully do these poor creatures despise their own mercies? Your daies of grace (for ought I know) may be very few, you had not need neglect them. The woman that will not come nigh the Chamber where her husband lodgeth, is not like to have a flourishing Bed.

2. But,

2. But secondly. *Take heed also,* of *making Christs Bed unquiet to him.* The unquiet wife often loseth her husbands Company, nothing makes Christs Bed so *unquiet to him, as sin doth.* The Soul, that resisteth convictions, quencheth the motions of the Spirit of God thrusteth Christ out of his Bed: while *you have the light,* do not only come unto it, but walk in it. Sanctuary sins make God abhor his Sanctuary and loath his dwelling place. Take heed of quenching private motions of the Spirit, or of resisting the more publick convictions of the word.

3. *Give up your selves to the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Apostle to the *Corinthians* saith, 2. *Cor.* 8. 5. that they *gave themselves to the Lord,* and *then to them.* Do what in you lies to give up your selves to the Word of God, allow not in your hearts any rebellious thoughts against it. *Audite verbum Dei & tacete*: Something of this you may do, when you hear the Word of God, convincing you of sin, hold your peace to it, suffer the conviction to take hold upon your hearts, and to have its operation But alas! man hath a vain, a stubborn, an unquiet, ungospellized heart. What therefore remains but that we should

4. Pray that the Lord would *keep us in his Bed,* and not himself *rise up from us,* let us therefore take unto our selves the words of the Prophet, *Jeremiah, Jer* 14. 7, 8, 9.

O *Lord though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy names sake, for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.*

O *the hope of* Israel, *the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why should'st thou be as a stranger in the land? And as a wayfaring man that turneth aside* to *tarry for a night?*

Why *should'st thou be as a man astonished? As a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou O Lord art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; O leave us not.*

Ser-

Sermon LXI.

Cant. 1. 17.

The Beams of our house are Cedar: and our Rafters of Fir.

THe same Person speaks still, which spake in the former verse, she had there Commended her beloved: and Commended her Bed, ever since he came into it: she now comes to Commend her, and her beloveds house, in the words of the Text, The *Beams of our house are Cedar* and *our rafters of Fir.* The Chaldee Paraph. thus glosseth: *Solomon the Prophet said, how beautiful is the house of Lords Sanctuary, builded by my hands, of Cedar wood. But the house of the Lords Sanctuary, which is to be builded in the days of the Messias is more beautiful, whose Beams are of those Cedars, which are in the Paradise of pleasure, and the Galleries thereof shall be of Fir, Pine, &c.* There are some difficult terms in the Text, I must therefore halt a little, in the explication of the letter.

קרות בתינו The Beams of our houses, The word is used two Kings, 6. 2. 5. 2 *Chron.* 3. 7. where it is translated also a *Beam, Gen.* 19. 8. it is translated a *roof*, it comes from קרה which in *Pibel* signifies to *lay the Beams of an house*: the Beams of an house are properly those pieces of timber which bear the whole weight of the building. The Beams of our house are, ארזים *Cedar.* The word properly so signifies. It is a word often used in Scripture to express that kind of wood which is called *Cedar*, which with us is very rare, with them very frequent, and ordinary in building, we shall by and by further inquire the nature of it. The Common usage of the word in Scripture to express *Cedars*, makes me a little wonder at *Montanus* his translation of it *Larices*, which signifies a certain tree, not known (saith *Vitruvius*,) but to those that dwelt near the *Adriatick sea*, a kind of wood very useful in buildings because

in regard of the great bitterness of the sap, it was neither subject to worms, nor putrefaction, nor to be burnt with fire? but I know not whether it was known to the Jews or no: nor can see any reason to depart from our translation. — It follows,

Ifod. l. 17. Diosc. l. 1. c. 74.

רחיטנו ברותים Our Rafters of fire, some read our *Galleries*: of *Cypress*, some of *Fir*, some of *Pine*. The word translated *rafters*, is used only in this sense in this place, it is also used, *Gen.* 30. 38. *v.* 41. *Exod.* 2. 16. but in those Texts it is translated *gutters, and wells*. And *Cant.* 7. 5. where it is translated *Galleries*. *Pagnine*, thinks it signifies the *little Beams*, or *pieces of timber* in buildings. These *Rafters*, saith the Text, are ברותים a word which is no where used in Scripture (saving only in this Text) which hath given Interpreters a liberty to abound in several senses: *Hieron*, makes it *Cypress*, so the LXX — Vulg. Lat. Syr. Arab. Others *Ash*, Others *Fir*. *Aben Ezra* Thinks it the same with ברושים *Fir*, our translators seem to follow that so, doth *Montanus*, and *Pagnine*. The *Caldee Paraph*, makes it to be the wood of the *Brutine* tree, of which tree *Pliny* speaks, and tells us that it is like a *Cypress tree*. The boughs white, the *smell sweet*. And a great enemy to Poyson, having thus far enquired the literal meaning of the terms, let us enquire for the real sense: we will first enquire

1. *Qu. What is here meant by the house mentioned.*
2. *What the Beams, and Rafters of this house are.*
3. *What the excellencies of these sorts of woods were.* Which maketh the Spouse chuse to compare her and her beloveds house, to an house builded of these sorts of wood.

1. *Qu. What is here meant, by the house, mentioned in the Text, Our house?*

Whoso considereth that the *Beloved* here mentioned *is the King of glory*, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who dwells not in houses made with hands, will easily conclude, it is no fabrick of wood and stone, Christ when he was upon the Earth had no such place where to hide his head, and now the Heaven of Heavens contain him) that is here meant. True it is, that the Lord of old, chose a particular house in which he was pleased more eminently to manifest his gracious presence, in allusion to which, his mystical Spiritual habitation may possibly be called his house. But this is not it which is here intended. The Chaldee Paraphrast makes *Solomon* in this a Prophet for foretelling an house

of

of God, to which *Solomons* in all its glory was not like. The new Testament mentions a double house of God. The first more publick, *viz. The Church*, 1. *Tim.* 3. 15. The second more private, *The Souls and bodies of believers*. The Apostle tells the *Ephesians*, that they were become an *habitation of God through the Spirit*: and the Apostle dissuades from the Sin of *Fornication*, upon this argument, because *their bodies were the temples of the Holy Ghost*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. By the house here I find Interpreters generally understanding the *aggregate body of Christians*, which we call the *Church*: properly enough called the *Lords house*, because as a man dwelleth in his house, so the Lord is said to *dwell* in his Church, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. God hath said he will *dwell amongst his People*, that he is in the *midst* amongst them, that he walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks, *&c.* So that by *our house* in the Text the Church is meant, in which Christ dwells, and the Saints dwell. See Heb. 3. 6.

The 2d Question is, *What is here meant by the Beams and Rafters?*

The Beams of a building you know, are those Principal parts which sustain, and uphold the building. We must therefore inquire what those things or Persons are which do as it were uphold, and bear up the Church: some understand by these terms *Persons*, others *understand things*: those who understand *Persons*, understand by the *Beams* the several sorts of *Officers in the Church of God*. Apostles, *Prophets*, *Evangelists*, *Pastors*, *Teachers*. By the rafters they understand *particular Christians*. So *Gregory*. *Per tigna cedrina praedicatores designamus, per laquearia cupressina ipsos populos figuramus.* This seems to be conform to that of the Apostle, *Eph.* 2. 20. *you are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*. But *Protestant Writers* observe, that the Apostle, there doth not make the *Apostles*, and *Prophets* the *foundation*, but *Christ* Preached by them, and their Doctrine. And thus they interpret, *Chrysostom Oecumenius, Theophylact, & Tertullian*, concluding that the *Apostles and Prophets*, could not be called *the foundation* upon any other account then with respect to their Ministry, and the Doctrine of the Gospel, Preached by them. For *other foundation can no man lay, then what is already laid, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Non enim respexit res nomen sed rem nominis* (saith *Chamier*;) others therefore by the *Beams* and *rafters*, *V. Bernard. hom.* *V. Greg. Mag. ad loc. Cetrus —sublimiores significat Sanctos, Cypressus simpliciores.*

of Christs house (mentioned in the Text) understand rather *things then Persons*: yet here again they are divided: some understanding by the *Beams* and *Rafters*, *The Word* and *Ordinances of God*. Thus the *Dutch Annotat. By the Beams is understood the Doctrine of the Prophets & Apostles.* 2. *Others understand* the *grace of the holy Spirit of God.* There are other particular fancies. But I shall chuse to follow those who interpret the *Rafters and Beams* to be the *Word* and *Ordinances* of God: for these like the Beams of an house keep up the Church, and are as it were the Common Soul, that running through the whole Church keeps it together and indeed makes it one, and so much shall serve for the second question: the third follows.

Si ad Ecclesias hæc referas quasi tigna earum sunt Divina Præcepta. Lud. de Ponte.

3. *Qu.* Why the Spouse, here compares the Word and Ordinances to *Cedar* and *Fir*, or *Cypress*, or *Brutine*.

There are four or five things which these trees, and sorts of wood are more famous for, *viz.* 1. *Duration.* 2. *Beauty.* 3. *strength.* 4. *Talness.* 5. *Smell.*

1. It is observed, of the *Cedar*, that it is a *beautiful, goodly tree*, I shall add the 4th. *Talness*; indeed its talness is a great part of its beauty: hence you read of the *goodly Cedar*, *Ezech.* 17. 23. *Psal.* 80. 10. and the tall *Cedar*, *Isa.* 37. 24. Cant. 5. 15.

2. As these are tall trees, so they are *strong*, and therefore ordinarily used in buildings, *strong and yet light.* Hence when the Holy Ghost sometimes would express the great power of God, he expresseth it under this Notion, *The voice of the Lord breaketh the Cedars in Lebanon, Psal.* 29. v. 5. *Firs* and *Cedars* are apt to bear *great weights and* yet without any great loading of the building.

3. It is observed of them that they are very *durable.* Naturalists, say, that they are not as other wood subject to *worms*, nor (so soon) to *rottenness and decay*, as other wood is. *Pliny* saith that it is commonly thought they will never decay: and gives an instance of the Temple of *Diana*, whose *Beams*, *Rafters* and *Spars* were made of *Cedar*: The *leaves and doors of Cypress.* And after 400 years, they not only continued sound, but (the doors especially) shining and as it were polished. They report of the Temple of *Apollo*, (whose Beams and main pieces were made of *Numidian Cedars*) that it continued entire and sound 1188 years. How true these stories are I cannot assert, but certain it is, these sorts of wood were very durable.

Pliny Nat. Hist. l. 16. cap. 40.

4. A 4th thing observed of the *Cedar* and *Cypress Trees*, is their *odoriferous smell*.

According to this interpretation of the Text, the scope of it is to Commend unto us, the Word of God, and the Gospel Ordinances. 1. For their *Beauty*. 2. *Continuance*. 3. *Power and and Efficacy*. 4. And lastly, For their *exceeding sweetness*. From the Text thus far opened, you may observe three Propositions.

1. Prop. *That the Church of God is the house of God.*

2. Prop. That the word, *and Ordinances of God, are the Beams and Rafters of this house.*

3. Prop. That there is a *Beauty, sweetness, power* and *efficacy*, and an incorruptible nature in the Word of God and Ordinances of the Gospel. I begin with these in their order.

1. Prop. *The Church of God is Jesus Christ's, and the believers house.* Our house (saith the Text.) We will first enquire,

1. What is meant by the *Church*. 2. How it appears, *that the Church is the house of the Lord Jesus Christ*. 3. *How it is the believers house*. 4. *What may be inferred* from hence for *our profit*, in matter of *knowledge and holiness*.

1. *Qu.* What is meant by *the Church*.

This hath in this latter age of the World been found an hard matter to agree amongst Persons of different Notions. That the term *Church*, is a name of multitude, and that a *Church*, must be an *aggregate body*, is generally agreed; that it is a *body of People called by God out of the World*, is also as freely consented to. But whether only called by a *general call*, outwardly accepted by them so far at least, that they do own the Doctrine of the Gospel, or by a more *special and effectual calling*, not only out of the *Pagan World*, but also out of the *unbelieving* World: These things have been matters of great dispute amongst us; yet all acknowledge the distribution of the Church into that which is Triumphant and that which is militant. The Triumphant part of the Church, is that part of it, who (God having in the time of their life called them out of the Paganish and unbelieving World and they afterward finished their course) are called also by God out of this sensible, sinful, elementary World to the enjoyment of himself in glory. These are thrice called, 1. Out of the *Pagan World*, to the acknowledgment of the Doctrine of the Gospel. 2. Out of the *unbelieving World*, to partake

take of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Grace by true and lively Faith. 3. *Out of the sensible sinful World*, to the *Inheritance of glory*. The other part of the Church, is that which is usually called *Militant*, and is the whole number of those whom God hath called out of the *Paganish World*, *to the acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and the *Doctrine of the Gospel*. This is again distinguished into that which is *Invisible*, and that which is *Visible*. The Invisible part is that whole number of men and women in the World, which the Lord by his Gospel hath called *out of darkness into marvelous light*, out of a state of Nature, into a state of Grace. The Matter of this Church are men and women; the Form their *Union* in and with the Lord Jesus Christ. The *Visible Church* is that about which the great quarrels have been: Some agreeing it to be the whole number of People over the face of the whole Earth, called out from a *state of Paganism*, to the embracing of the Doctrine of the Gospel. The Matter of it are *men and women professing to Christ Jesus*; the Form is their *Union* in the same Profession, acknowledgment of the same Truth, and Waies, and Means of Worship. Now, as the Sea is but one, though as it passeth by several Coasts it receives several denominations, as the *Irish Sea*, the *English Sea*, the *Mediterranean Sea*, the *Baltick Sea*, &c. so as this great body is divided into several Countries, it receives several denominations, as The Church of *England*, *Scotland*, *France*, &c. And as again in a particular Nation (suppose *England*) it is impossible that the whole body of Professors should meet in one place; and therefore there are several places of Publick Worship, and several Precincts of People who meet together in several places to worship God, (yet all agreeing in the same Doctrine of Faith, and order of serving God) so there are in the World thousands of such Bodies which are called *particular Churches*, and are under the inspection of several Officers; all which yet together make but one Church of God. For their Notion who think that the Church of God must needs be such an even number as can meet together in the same numerical acts of Worship, in one place, we conceive it stands upon no such bottom, that it deserves any pains in the confutation of it; it may be a good Notion of a particular Church, but not an exclusive of the Application of the term to more. Now this *Visible Church of God*, is that which is Christ's House. The Invisible Church is so, and the Visible Church is so. *He walketh in the midst of the golden Candlesticks.* 2. That

Upon which account you read in Scripture of Churches, and the word in the Text is plural, *our houses.*

2. That this is Christ's House, appears,

1. *From the letter of Scripture*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. *That thou mayest know how thou ought'st to behave thy self in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God.* Timothy's charge was not the Invisible Church, but the Visible Church; this is called the House of God, *Heb.* 3. 6. Christ is said to be *faithful as a Son over his own house, whose house, saith he, we are*, &c. I shall not here dispute the Question, whether the hypocritical part of the Visible Church be *equivocal* or *univocal* Members; sure I am, take those together with the sincere Professors, and they make up but one Church, which is his House.

But secondly; Look which way you will upon the Church, it is *Christ's House*, he hath the dominion of it, and he useth it as his House; he hath *bought it*, *Act.* 20. 28. he hath *redeemed it with his own precious blood*. *It is given him*. *It is his House by right of donation*. The Members of it are given him by his Father. The *Stones of it are his*; the Saints are *the lively Stones built up into this Spiritual House*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. and they are built upon the foundation of his *Apostles and Prophets*, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone*; *they are sanctified in and through Jesus Christ*; his blood is as the Mortar and Cement, by that they are united to God, and made one each with other: The Builder is his Spirit, *Eph.* 2. 22. Consider an House as *to the use of it*; and upon that account they are also *his House*. Is an House the place where a man abideth and dwelleth? so is the Church to the Lord *Jesus Christ*; that's the place where he dwelleth: He dwels of old in *Mount Zion*, *Isa.* 8. 18. there he abideth. Is the House a man's *resting place*? so is *Zion* to God, 2 *Chron.* 6. 41. *Psal.* 132. 8, 13, 14. *The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it.* Is the House a man's *feeding place*, where he *diverts*, and *supports*, and *feeds*? so is the Church, *Cant.* 2. 16. *He feedeth among the Lilies*. When the Spouse desired to be informed where Christ fed, the answer was, *Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the Flock*, *Cant.* 1. 7. Is that a man's House where he keeps *his Wife*, *his Children*, *his Servants*? such is the Church, there Christ keeps his Children, his Servants, his Spouse. Is a man's House the place where he spends what he hath? such is the Church, there it is that Christ gives out grace and glory, yea and every good thing. Lastly; Is a man's House the place where he is protected and defended? such is the Church to Christ, there he expects protection for his great Name, his Ordinances, *&c.* But this is enough

Quoad Dominium.

Quoad Usum.

enough to have shewed you the propriety of the Metaphor. But,

3. The Church is not only Christ's House, but it is the *Believer's House too*; not the Believer's House as to *dominion and title, but as to use.* No man but Jesus Christ alone hath a dominion and Lordship over the Church of God; even the Apostles themselves were but Ministers to it. But yet I say, The Church is the *Believer's House*; it is the *place where he dwells*: He chuseth rather to be a *Door-keeper in the House of the Lord, than to dwell in the Tents of wickedness*, *Psal.* 84. 10. Hear *David* expressing himself, *Psal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the daies of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple.* A man cannot be a Believer, but he must forthwith be a Member of the Church Invisible. None is a true Believer, but he immediately, by his Profession of that Faith, makes himself a Member of the *Catholick Visible Church*; and he will desire to unite himself to the particular Assemblies, which are parts of that Catholick Body. No sooner were the three thousand converted, at St. *Peter's* Sermon, *Act.* 2. 41. But *they added* to the Church, and there they dwell, *v.* 42. *They continue stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship*, and in *breaking of bread and prayers.* No sooner was *Paul* converted, *Act.* 9. 26. but he assayeth to *joyn himself unto the Disciples.* And *v.* 28. he was with them *going out and coming in* at Hierusalem. But this is enough to have spoken to the Explication of the Point. I come to the Application, which shall be in four words. This Notion speaks the Churches 1. *Dignity*, 2. *Duty*, 3. *Security*, 4. *Probability of Reformation.*

Use 1. In the first place; This Notion speaks the *Church's Dignity.* It is the *Habitation of the King of Kings.* When *Jacob* in his Journey to *Padan-Aram*, had had that notable Vision, he breaketh out in the morning into this expression, *v.* 17. *How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God, this is the Gate of Heaven.* I am not speaking of the Church in a *local notion*, but of the *true Church.* The number of true Believers, or the number of Visible Professors, let the World value them as much as they please, they are a Noble Society. Those who have *clean hands, and pure hearts, who have not lift up their Souls unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully, they shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of their Salvation. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O Jacob*, *Psal.* 24. 4, 5, 6. Believers may have their infirmities, and a Professing People may have their great failings,

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(the Lord be merciful to the Professors of *England* for theirs) but yet take them (notwithstanding all) and they are the best People in the World; they are the Lord's Habitation, he hath pitched his Tents among them, and manifests *his presence* with them.

Secondly; As it speaks *the Dignity of the Church*; so it speaks the *Duty of those who are the Members of the Church*, Psal. 93. 5. *Holiness becomes thine House, O Lord.* The Wise man commands us to keep our feet when we go into the *House of God*, *Eccles.* 5. And God bid *Moses* put off the shoes from off his feet, upon this account, because he was upon *holy ground*, (he was near the burning Bush) where God made himself a temporary Habitation. Those that take upon them the Profession of Religion, stand concerned to be holy; and those that are entred into the Profession of it stand concerned to be holy; they are in the House of God, and *God is an holy God.* There is in this Notion a double Argument for this, from 1. *God's Holiness*, 2. *God's Jealousie.* Use 2.

1. *God is an holy God*: Hence those who are *unholy*, are not like to please him, nor he likely to continue long with them. Look as it is with a Neat man, who hath a large House, the filth and nastiness of this or that Room, will not make him leave his whole House, but it may make him leave this or that part of it, and seldom or never be seen in this or that Room; the dirty filthy Room shall not be his Lodging-chamber, nor the place where he will rest or feed: So it is betwixt God and the Church. The prophaneness or looseness of a particular Church, or particular Person in the Church, shall not make God forsake his whole Church; but it may cause God to leave this or that Church, or this or that Member of the Church.

2. God's *Jealousie* engageth *Members of his Church to be holy*: Hence it is that he is more severe to a Professing People living contrary to their Profession, than to any others. *Judgment begins at the House of God.* Hence that in *Jer.* 7. 9, 10. *Will you steal, murther, and commit Adultery, and swear falsly, and burn Incense to* Baal, *and walk after other Gods whom you know not, and come and stand before me in this House which is called by my Name? — Is this House which is called by my Name become a Den of Robbers*, &c. And that, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* O therefore, you that profess to God, be holy, for he is an holy God, and a jealous God, and you are his House. 1 Pet. 4. 17. Jer. 7. 9, 10.

3. I may add a third Argument, it is that of the Apostle, *Heb.* 3. 6. —*Whose House we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoycing of hope firm to the end.* The *unholy man* disclaims God, and God disclaims him; he hath but the name of a stone in the Lord's House, if he be not a *lively stone.*

Use 3. Thirdly; This Notion of the Church's being the House of God, speaks *protection and security* to it. Every man stands obliged to *defend his House.* God stands obliged by his Nature, and by his Word, to *protect and defend his Church:* Hence those many Promises for its protection, *Psal.* 46. 5. *God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not fall,* Psal. 125. 2. *As the Mountains are round about* Hierusalem, *so the Lord is round about his People. The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it,* Matth. 16. 18. with many others of the like nature, particular Churches may be destroyed and rooted out. But God will have a dwelling place upon the Earth, let Satan and his Instruments do what they can.

Use 4. Fourthly, It speaks to us *hopes of Reformation.* No man will suffer his House to fall down, but will *repair it,* if there be any *breaches,* and if he be able, he will make it his business to adorn and beautifie it, and make it fit for him to dwell in it. God will not let his House run to ruine, but will seasonably repair it, and make it a dwelling-place fit for his Holiness.

Use 5. Lastly; Is the Church *Christ's House,* and the *Saints House?* what cause have we to bless God who hath cast our Lot *within the Pales of the Church?* And how do we all stand concerned not to forsake her Assemblies. But I shall not inlarge further upon this first Proposition.

Sermon LXII.

Cantieles 1. 17.

The Beams of our House are Cedar, and our Rafters are of Fir.

I Come to the second Proposition, which I have observed out of these words.

Prop. 2. *That the Word and Ordinances of God are the Beams and Rafters of his House, which is his Church.* So

So I chose rather to interpret these *metaphorical terms* than (as some) concerning *Persons*. I shall shew you the propriety of the Metaphor in a few particulars.

1. *Beams and Rafters* are integral parts of an House, indeed part of the substance of it, without which there can be no House. An House may want a due proportion of Beams and Rafters, and yet be an House; but some there must be, some more principal *Beams and Rafters*, or there can be no House; *Without the Word and Ordinances of God, there can be no Church of God.* Every company of men make not a Church, but a company owning the Word of God, and walking in the Fellowship of Ordinances; these make an House of God. A Church may for a time (it may be for some long time) want some particular Ordinances, and yet be a true Church of God, but its state must be lame and imperfect. But if it want all the Ordinances, if it wants the *Word and Sacraments*, which are the Church's Beams, it cannot be a Church of God. It is lame if it wants any Ordinance of God, but it loseth the nature of a *Church* if it wants *all Ordinances*. That which makes a Church to be a Church, is Union and Fellowship; now the Word of God, and the Doctrine of Faith contained in the Word and the Ordinances for Worship and Order, are those things in which the Church hath its Fellowship, by which the Members of the Church have Fellowship both with God, and also one with another.

2. *The House is built upon Beams and Rafters, and they bear up the weight of the other materials.* The weight of every Tile in the House lies upon the Rafters, and the whole Building is laid upon the *groundsel* and *dormans*, and *wall-plates*, and *studds*; all which come under these two Notions of Beams and Rafters. The Church of God also is builded upon the Word of God; this is that which the Apostle, *Eph.* 2. 20. calls the *Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*; the *Faith* and *Obedience* of every particular Member of the Church is builded upon the Word of *Promise*, and the Word of *Precept*. Our *Faith* is built upon the Promises of the Word; our *Obedience* upon the Precepts, they are the *Foundations*, and *Rule of all Holiness*. The whole weight of every particular Soul is laid upon the Word, and the weight of the whole Church lies upon the Word of God. Look as it is in an earthly house builded with the hands of men, if the Beams prove false or untrusty, or the Foundations prove unsure, the whole Building either sinks and falls, or at least sways this or that way: So it is with the Church as to the

Word of God; yea ſo it is as to every particular Soul; the ſecurity of the particular Soul, and the whole Fabrick of the Church, depends upon the *truth, and ſureneſs, and permanency of the Word of God.* If the Word of God ſhould not hold ſure, if the Truth of God could be found a Lye, all our Faith and Hope is in vain. The very notion of a Church is a *Chimara*, and the greateſt concernments of it are buried up in ruines. It is the Word of God that is the Baſis of the Church, and the Baſis of every individual Soul, that is a Member of that Church.

3. *The Beams and Rafters of an Houſe, as they ſupport the burthen, and bear the weight of the Building: ſo they alſo unite the parts and ſides of it*; they are the *Mediums* of Union to it; ſo is the *Word and Ordinances* to the Church: The Word is the Foundation upon which the Church, and every particular Soul is builded; and the Doctrine of Faith, and the Ordinances of God, are the means of *Union* in it. I do not think that an Explicit Covenant-Union, is neceſſary to the conſtitution of a Church: I think that Union which the whole Church hath in the Profeſſion of the ſame Doctrine of Faith, and in the practice of the ſame Ordinances & Rules of Worſhip, is ſufficient to make up ſuch an Union amongſt all Goſpel Profeſſors, as may juſtifie the denomination of a *Catholick Church.* And again, an agreement in the Profeſſion of the ſame Faith, and the practice of the ſame Ordinances in the ſame place, is enough to make up a particular Church of God. Look as in a Building, let the walls be at never ſo many foot diſtance one from another, yet the beams or dormans that go acroſs the Building, unite them together, and make them all but one and the ſame Building: So it is with the whole number of Profeſſors, ſcattered over the face of the whole Earth, though part of them be in *England*, part in *France*, part in *Germany*, part in other parts of the World, yet the ſame Doctrine and Profeſſion of Faith, and the practice of the ſame Ordinances of Worſhip running through them all, makes the whole but one Body, *one Church*, the Houſe of the Living God.

4. Look as it is with the *Beams* and *Rafters*; the *purer*, and *ſtronger*, and more *ſubſtantial* they are, and the more intire and homogeneous they are, the ſtronger the Houſe is: So it is as to the Word and Ordinances of God; the purer the *Doctrine of Faith*, and *Ordinances* for Worſhip are, the ſtronger and better the Church is. If the Beams of an Houſe be ſappy, or rotten, or patched up of ſeveral heterogeneous pieces, the weaker the Houſe is, and more ſubject

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to fall, and to decay: So it is with the Church, which is the *House of the Living God.* If the *Doctrine of Faith, owned and professed in it,* be as it were *heart of Oke,* pure Doctrine, taken out of the heart of the Written Word, not sappy through the additions of Humane Inventions, nor heterogeneous, part of it the pure Word of God, part of it the meer Fancies and Doctrines of men; if the Ordinances for Worship practised in it, be pure Ordinances, if the Tabernacle be *according to the Pattern of the Mount,* according to the form of sound words, and pure Rule of the Gospel, the Church is fair, and glorious, and strong, the *gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*; but if otherwise, if the Doctrine of Faith professed in it be mingled with the Clay of Humane Fancies and Errours; if the Ordinances of Worship practised in it, be full of the sap of Traditions and Ceremonies, the Church is a declining, decaying Church, and hath no strength in her. The reason is, because God will not continue with such a Church. The Psalmist saith of the Church, *God is in the midst of her, therefore she shall not fall*; now they must be *golden Candlesticks* in the midst of *which God walketh.* But thus much may be sufficient to shew you the propriety of the Metaphor. Let me shortly Apply this before I pass on to the other Proposition.

Use 1. This (in the first place) commends unto us the Excellency of *the Word of God, and the Doctrine of Faith contained in it, and the Excellency of Gospel Ordinances*; they are the *Beams and Rafters of the House of God,* hewed out, framed and fitted to the Building, by him who was the Master-builder, the Lord Jesus Christ, and laid by him. The Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 10, 11. saith, that as a wise *Master-builder he had laid the Foundation, and another builded thereon*--v. 11. *Other Foundation could no man lay, than that already laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Christ is called the Church's *Fundamentum,* its Foundation, and he is the *lapis angularis,* the corner stone, as is contained in the Scripture. Saith St. *Peter,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. *Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect and precious; the head of the body,* *Col.* 1. 18. He *from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, Eph.* 4. 16. Our Divines say, that Christ is the Foundation of the Church in a double sense. 1. He is *Fundamentum Salutis,* the Foundation of Salvation in the Church: The Salvation of every Soul lieth upon his shoulders, *Act.* 4. 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other.* 2. He is *Fundamentum*

1 Cor. 3. 10, 11.

1 Pet. 2. 6.

Col. 1. 18.

Eph. 4. 16.

Acts 4. 12. *damentum Fidei, & Cultus*, the Foundation of *Faith*, and *Doctrine* of *Worship* and *Order*, the Foundation of Doctrine and Ordinances, I say: And as no man can lay any other Foundation of Salvation than Christ; so neither can any lay any other Beams of *Doctrine* or *Institutions* for *Worship*, but what Jesus Christ hath laid. Christ, by himself, and by *his Apostles*, laid these Foundations and Beams of Doctrine and Worship; from the Gospel of Christ, and the Writings of the Apostles must be drawn, the Articles for the first, and the *Canons* for the latter: And the whole Building of the Church depends upon these Foundations and Beams. Let the Word of Faith, or the Purity of Worship fail from the Church, or any part thereof, it presently ceaseth to be a Church of God, and turns into an *Antichristian Synagogue*. Now I say, this commends to every Christian, the *Doctrine of Faith*, and the *Ordinances of God*. There is an Excellency in *Entity* or *Being*: Hence whatsoever it be which gives Being to a thing, and without which it would not be (at least not such) hath a great Excellency in it; and the more noble the thing is, to which Being is given, the more Excellent is the Form by which it hath such Being. The Soul of man gives *Being to a man*: The Body without the Soul is but a lump of flesh, a piece of Clay; the Soul informeth, and inliveneth, and giveth an Humane Being to it; separate that from it, and the man is no more. Some Philosophers have vainly dreamed of an *Anima Mundi*, a general Soul of the World, which should give *Form, Life, Motion to every part of the World*. Now as the Soul of a man is more excellent than any Souls of Beasts, because it is the Principle of a more Noble Being, so (doubtless) if there were any such Universal Soul, which gave Life, Being, Motion, Form, Union, to all the World, it would be a more excellent substance than any particular Soul is. But God himself supplieth that place. Now *The Word and Ordinances of the Gospel*, though they be not *Anima Mundi*, the Soul of the World. Yet they are *Anima Ecclesiæ*, as it were the Soul of the Church of God, without which the Church would be no such thing as the Church of the Living God: They are those things which make the Church to be a *Church*; and the whole Church to be but one Church. Let this therefore engage every Christian to prize the Word, and to prize the *Ordinances* of the Gospel. That's the first Branch.

Use 2. Hence in the second place you may observe, what is a *sad Symptom of a decaying Church, and by this you may also discern a lame and*

and imperfect Church. Look as in a Building there are some more principal Beams and pieces of Timber, without which there can be no House, no Building: Others that are integral parts, without which the Building is not compleat, yet the House may be an House, though lame and imperfect. So it is in this case, without the *Doctrine of Faith*, and some *Ordinances of Worship*, the Church is no Church. If any part of the *Doctrine of Faith* be wanting, or corrupted in a Church, the Church is (however true) yet lame and imperfect. Suppose a Church wholly want some Ordinances, (as some do the Ordinances of Ecclesiastical Censures,) yet they are not by this made no Church, if they have the *Doctrine of Faith*, and *some Ordinances of Worship*; much less ought a Church to be so censured, for the temporary want or suspension of the Exercise of some Ordinances, (which was the case of the Jewish Church in the Wilderness as to *Circumcision*) but yet the Church that wanteth such Ordinances is imperfect and lame. And again I say, this is a sad Symptom of a *decaying Church, when either the Doctrine of Faith, or Ordinances of Worship, are denied, or corrupted in it*; for these are the *Beams* and *Rafters* of the House; and *every one* grants that House to be a decaying, declining House, where the Beams and Rafters are rotten. We need no further Evidence of this than what we have in God's Epistles to the seven Churches of *Asia*, recorded by St. *John* in the second and third Chapters of the *Revelation*. The Church of *Smyrna* was a decaying Church: The Doctrine of *Balaam*, and of the *Nicolaitans* was holden in it. The Church of *Thyatira* was a decaying Church, for the Woman *Jezabel* taught, and seduced the Servants of God in it. And but a while after, (these Rafters and Beams being decayed) these Houses of God fell, and to this very day lie in their rubbish. From that time that *Jeroboam* set up the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*, and the Kings of *Judah* set up Altars in Groves, the Church of the Jews was a declining, decaying Church, and the Rulers of it, and Members of it having no heart timely to repair, and reform it, the House fell. It is true, God raised it again after the Captivity, but it decaying the second time, fell, and lies buried in its Ruines this day.

Thirdly. From this Notion, may be drawn a great *argument both for unity, and uniformity. Unity in matters of faith. Uniformity in matters of practice.* The Doctrine of *unity* in the Church of the Gospel is exceedingly prest in Scripture, scarce is there any one of the Epistles of the Apostles, in which, it is not again

and

and again pressed; *Be of one mind*: there is a double union, which is our duty to labour after. The first is *unitas fidei*: the unity of faith, *as to the understanding*. The second is *unitas Charitatis quoad affectum*, the unity of Love, and Charity as to the affections. The latter of these hath been highly pleaded for in these sinful, and wofully divided times: and indeed never more need of it, but it hath not been duly considered, that considering the corrupt state of man, *The former union must be the Mother of the latter*. For as all love is founded in some *similitude*, so this love and affection where it hath any where grown up to its due heighth, we shall find, hath been founded in the similitude of understanding, and *de facto* it is evident, that amongst Christians of different persuasions in the things of God, there hath seldom been an intireness of cordial affection. Indeed these things ought not to be: therefore I do not Commend them, nor yet blame the exhortation of brethren of divided Principles to an union in affection, forbearing one another where all things have not been alike revealed to all; but such is the corruption of our natures, that this is rather *optandum*, then *sperandum*, to be wished for rather than hoped, for if there could be *unity* in Judgment and *uniformity in practice*, (which the Apostle calls a thinking and a *speaking* the same things) the other union of affection would follow more readily: O let us labour for this. There is but one *truth*, but one *true rule of Worship*. This Doctrine, these rules are contained in the Word of God: these are the *Beams* and *Rafters* of the Church, and if the same *Beams* and *Rafters* run through the whole Church, and be upon every part of the roof, we may expect that the building should be strong, and durable; on the other side, the difference of these Beams and Rafters, whiles one Church holds one thing in matter of faith, another Church holdeth another thing, nay, whiles one particular Christian believes one thing, another Christian believes another thing, whiles this Church, or this Christian Worships God after one way and order, another Church, or other Christians, they Worship God after another way: though indeed it is possible their differences may not be so great, but they may yet agree in one and the same head, the Lord Jesus Christ, and so both parties differing may at last be saved, yea, it may be their differences are not so great, but there may be a just for-

1 Cor. 1. 10.

bearing

bearing one of another (provided all Christians were of equal understandings, or that they rightly understood each other;) yet doubtless, this breach of *unity*, as to matters of Judgment, in things relating to the Doctrine of Faith, and breach of *Uniformity* as to matters of *practice*, is a great weakening of the Church of God, and much spoileth the beauty, and glory of it: O therefore study *unity*, and study *uniformity*: you strengthen the building by both these, you weaken it, by dividing or disagreeing (at least to open notice.) It is to me very remarkable that St. *Paul* almost in every Epistle presseth these things, and *Phil.* 4. 2. when but two *women dissented*, he thought it worthy of his pains to persuade them to it: I *beseech* Euodias, *and I beseech* Syntyche *that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* Doest thou therefore O Christian, differ from other Christians amongst whom thou livest, in any *matter of faith*, or *in any matter* of *practice*, as to fellowship in Ordinances? sit not down Satisfied, but labour for this unity, for this uniformity. And as means to it, let me but offer you my thoughts. Phil. 4. 2.

1. I would have Christians *open hearted and free in the discovery of their dissents.* It is one of the great plagues of our times, that Christians are not free one with another, but lock up their private opinions, and make it a great piece of their art to conceal themselves and to lurk under ambiguous phrases, *&c.* It is true some are too open: the Apostle Commands him that in an indifferent thing hath a particular *faith, to have it to himself before God, Rom.* 14. 22. that *it is to be understood* as to the open publishing of it to the disturbance of others, and the offence of the weak: but in the mean time (doubtless) a prudent discovery of such dissents, to able and faithful Persons of a differing Judgment, would much contribute to the unity of Christians.

2. Especially 2dly, If they would be *willing to be convinced*, and to *hear arguments against themselves*, to bring forth their strong reasons and to hear others bring forth theirs also: I know not how it comes to pass, that Christians who have Spiritual sores, in their understandings and Judgments, are very loth to discover them, and are impatient of having them touched (at least) at first, would Christians be willing to take Satisfaction, and give Satisfaction each to other, many of our differences in Doctrine and practice would easily be composed;

especially if to their mutual discourses to this purpose they would but bring humble hearts, and *pietatem discendi* rather then *discutiendi acumen*, a pious mind to learn rather then a desire to shew their quaintness in arguing their own cause (which *Augustine* lamented that he did not do in his reading the Scriptures whiles he was a young man.)

3. And 3dly, If to all this Christians would add *Prayer* unto that God who *reveales* truth to his People, it would highly contribute to this unity I am pleading for, it is a piece of Christs intercession for us that we might be one.

4. And lastly, Would Christians (as becomes such as are humble) *if after all due means used for mutual Satisfaction, and attaining to this happiness, but learn that piety and prudence which the Apostle Commands and reason dictateth*, viz. *To keep the things wherein they dissent to themselves and walk together so far forth, as they have mutually attained, and are mutually agreed*: certainly this would go very far, and if this course did not fully contribute to preserve the *strength* and *beauty* of the *Beams*, and *Rafters*, of Gods house amongst us; yet the weakness of them, or rather indeed our weakness would not be so manifest to our enemies nor our nakedness so much discovered unto them that hate us.

Use 4. Is the *Doctrine of faith*? And are the Ordinances of God, the Beams, and *Rafters of the Church*? How much are we then all concerned to keep them in their *strength*, and *purity*, and *beauty*. We are Commanded to *contend earnestly for the faith which was delivered once to the Saints*, *Jude*. 3. and to strive together for the faith of the Gospel, *Phil.* 2.7. *There is a striving about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers*, which the Apostle warns *Timothy* against, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14. and there is a striving about *things* that are indifferent and it may be granted on both sides to be so. These are vain janglings and unprofitable strivings. But there is a striving for the *Doctrine of faith*, against *Heretick*s, and erroneous Persons, and there is a striving for a true *Worship of God*, and a pure administraton of Ordinances, according to the rule of the word, without the mixture of Ceremonies and humane Inventions. In these things Christians that are members of the Church, stand highly concerned to strive: To strive to maintain, the Word of God, and the Doctrines of faith contained in them, that they be not corrupted

rupted with the leaven of errour. And to maintain the Worship of God in its perfection, that no part of it be lost: and in its purity, that the administration of it be not mixed up with humane inventions: now to strive for these things is a noble striving, and worthy of Christians: for the Ordinances of God and the Word of God they are the Beams and Rafters of the house of God, and what man is there that doth not take himself concerned to take care of the *Beams* and *Rafters* of his house, that nothing comes to them which may expose them to a sudden putrefaction and rotenness, and indanger the whole building to fall? If a Church defends the Doctrine of the Word, and the Ordinances of God, and maintains them in their strength, beauty, purity, they will defend it. There can be no instance given of Gods leaving any Church, so long as the Doctrine of faith remained in it incorrupted, and the Ordinances of God abode in it and were administred in their power, strength and purity. But this is enough to have spoken to the 2d Proposition: the 3d yet remains.

Sermon LXIII.

Cant. 1. 17.

The Beams of our house are Cedar: and our Rafters are of Fir.

I Am now come to the last Proposition which I observed out of these Words, with which I shall close my discourses, both upon this verse, and upon this whole Chapter. The point is this:

Prop. 3. *There is a Beauty, Sweetness, Power and Efficacy, and an incorruptible nature in the Word and Ordinances of God.*

These four things I noted to you concerning these two sorts of wood to which the Spouse here likeneth the Beams, and Rafters of the Church which is her, and her beloveds house:

Here are four things (in the Propoſition) prædicated of theſe Spiritual Rafters

1. The firſt is *Beauty*. Cedars, and Fir trees, are *tall*, and goodly trees, the latter loſe not their beauty in the Winter time. *Zion* of old was called *the perfection of beauty*, *Pſal.* 50. 2. *ſtrength and beauty* were ſaid to be *in the Sanctuary*, *Pſal.* 96. 6. the feet of them who bring glad tidings of peace are called *beautiful*, *Rom.* 10. 15. the Sanctuary indeed of old had an external beauty, it was full of Gold, and of rare work, which much pleaſed the carnal Eyes of the beholders. This beauty is ceaſed with the Jewiſh Worſhip. But there is a greater beauty ſtill remaining, the beauty of *Solomons* Temple in all its glory, was not like the beauty of Goſpel adminiſtration.

Pſal. 50. 2.
96. 6.
Rom. 10. 15.

1. *Beauty is a pleaſing thing.* That which Satisfieth the loſt of the Eye, is that which we call carnal beauty: the orderly adminiſtration of Goſpel inſtitutions is *a comely thing* in the Eyes of a Spiritual Soul, the ſimplicity of the Goſpel adminiſtrations hinders not the beauty at all. The ſober, grown Perſon, thinks a ſuit of plain Spaniſh cloth, as beautiful, as the Child thinks its gay coat, whoſe colours it may be are more diverſe and the ribbands about it of ſeveral colours, but the ſubſtance of it not of half ſo much value. Tis true the legal adminiſtrations were more gay, but though the trimming were more coſtly the cloth was not ſo good: They were all but *ſhadows of things to come*. The ſubſtance is ours. What ſober Perſon lives in a Congregation, where the Sabbaths of God are ſtrictly obſerved: where the Paſtor powerfully, plainly, clearly, gravely, Preacheth the wholeſome Doctrines of the Goſpel, Prays powerfully and Spiritually, where the Word of God is read, and the Sacraments duly and orderly adminiſtred, where *Pſalms* are daily ſung in a Spiritual manner, and the Ordinances of diſcipline, are prudently and faithfully executed, and doth not ſee a great comelineſs in them, at which his Soul is pleaſed, and with which it is delighted?

2. As they are exceeding pleaſing to a Spiritual heart, ſo there is a *lovely Majeſty in them, and alſo a great Symmetry and proportion.* God hath ſtamped a certain ſecret Majeſty upon every holy inſtitution of his, which Commandeth love and reverence for it, from all ſober Perſons, who have not outlawed both their reaſon and Religion too, and here again the plainneſs,

and

and simplicity of the Gospel administrations gives advantage to them: besides there is a great Symmetry in them; the Word Preached is *verbum audibile*, an audible word, the Sacrament is *verbum visibile*, a visible word. When the Gospel is Preached, what is Preached but Christ crucified, and what is that which is represented in the *Sacrament* but a Christ crucified? The whole Gospel administration is a goodly thing, and doth shine *nativo luce* in a certain native light of its own; and hath such a loveliness attends the pure dispensation of it, that the superadding of any humane inventions, is but like adding black patches to a lovely face, without which it was far more beautiful.

3. But lastly the *Beauty of the Word and Ordinances, of the Gospel lies in this that the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ is upon them.* This is that which gives them lustre. Observe holy *David, Psal.* 27. v. 4. *one thing have I desired of the Lord: that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the daies of my life,* to behold the beauty of the Lord, & *to enquire in his holy Temple.* The gracious Soul sees the Face of God in his Word, and the Image of Christ in Ordinances, this makes them lovely. Look as it is with the body; let it be never so goodly a structure, the lineaments of it never so proportioned, yet if the Soul informs it not, there is no beauty in it: So it is with Ordinances. Christ is the Soul of Ordinances, and it is only his stamp upon them, his presence in them, which makes them lovely, and beautiful. Take the Word of God, as Christ is wrapt up in it; the Ordinances of God, as they are the institutions of Christ and sacred conduit pipes, and means, by which Christ conveys himself, and the influences of his grace, into Peoples Souls; so they are exceeding beautiful: they are those performances in which the Soul seeth Christ, and meets with Christ; and this makes them goodly things.

2. The 2d thing which the Proposition predicates concerning the *word and Ordinances*, is *power and Efficacy*, and *usefulness*, I observed to you concerning *Cedars*, that as they had much *beauty and* goodliness in them: so they had much *strength in them*, which made them very useful for Beams and Rafters, fit to bear the weight of materials in building laid upon them and to uphold the building. There is a wonderful power and vertue in the Word and Ordinances of God.

1. There

1. There is a *supporting power in them.*
2. There is a *working power in them.*
3. There is in them a *supporting power.* They support a Church. The Apostle saith that the Church is built upon the *foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*, Eph. 2. the Church cannot stand without them: they support a *particular Soul.* The weight of poor Souls all lies upon the Word of God: how often doth holy *David* speak to this in that excellent Psalm, *Psal.* 119. v. 49. *Remember thy Word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope*, v. 15. *This is my comfort in my affliction for thy Word hath quickened me*, 81. *My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation: but I hope in thy word*, v. 92. *unless thy love had been my delight I should have perished in my affliction.* Nay herein doth the wonderful power of the Word of God appear above the strength of Cedars, you must imagine a Cedar Beam of some proportionable bigness to bear the great weight of a building, every stick of Cedar will not do it. But now not the whole Word of God only, but a particular promise, will strangely support and bear up the whole weight of a Soul sinking into despair, I have heretofore given you strange instances in this case, and I doubt not but many of your Souls can verify this from a particular experience.

2. But further, there is a *working power likewise, in the Word, and Ordinances;* this is now more than is in a *Cedar beam*, that hath in it a great strength, but it hath *no life*, it is an inanimate thing, and so worketh nothing, it beareth much, but hath no activity in it. *The words which I speak* (saith our Saviour) *are Spirit, and life.* Indeed the life and Spirit which they have, is Christs *life, Christs Spirit*, without which they are but dead letters, and weak things, but from Christs concurrence with them, they have not only the forementioned power to uphold, and bear up a sinking Soul, but they have an active, working power, to cast down the *strong holds* of the Soul (according to that of the Apostle 2. Cor. 10. 4.) *The Weapons of our warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ.* But I shall not insarge upon this being something beyond my Metaphor, but

3. The third thing which my Proposition predicateth of the Word

Word & Ordinances of God is *sweetness*. This is one thing which I observed to you concerning the Cedar wood, and the pine Tree they were of a grateful and delightful smell. The sweetness of the *Cedar* is a grateful odor to the exterior sense: But the sweetness of the *Word and Ordinances* of God is *intellectual*, they are sweet to the inward man. Which intellectual sweetness is yet set out by similitudes of sensible things, Psal. 119. 103. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste!* What is sweeter than honey? (saith Samson, Judg. 14. 18.) Holy *David* telleth him, Psal. 19. 10. *The word of God is sweeter than the honey or the honey comb*, and Psal. 119. 104. He doubleth the Expression for the further confirmation of it. They are the words of God, that are the pleasant words, of which *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 16. 24. Pleasant words are as an *honey comb*, Sweet to the Soul and *health to the bones*. The sweetness, that resulteth to the Spiritual sense, from the word of God, ariseth from two things.

1. The first is that *sweet joy and peace, which God Ordinarily brings into the Soul from them. God will speak peace to his People* (saith the Psalmist) and he creates *the fruit of the lips peace, peace*, (saith the Prophet) this joy is indeed of different degrees, there is the *rejoicing of hope*, for hope growing from a true Root bringeth forth some fruit of joy in the Soul, though it indeed be not so fair and pleasant a fruit as that joy which is the fruit of assurance, because the Union which hope gives the Soul with its beloved object, is of the lowest sort. But yet even this *joy* hath a great deal of *sweetness*, but Oh! How great is that sweetness which is the ripest fruit of assurance, that peace which passeth all understanding? A sweetness which oft times overcomes the Soul and is too great for it to bear. Both which the Soul reaps from the word of God and from the Ordinances of God.

2. But secondly this sweetness in the *Word and Ordinances of God* ariseth not from this alone, but from their usefulness of them to the Soul. That is not only sweet, but that also which is profitable. *David* saies, that the Law of the Lord doth *convert* the Soul, makes *wise the simple, enlightens the Eyes*, that they are useful to *warn us*, and that in *keeping them there is great reward*. By the word and the Ordinances of God the Soul hath wherewithal to answer the tempter, in that it finds Arguments to help it in repelling a secret motion to sin, &c.

This

This makes the Word and Ordinances of God exceeding sweet to gracious Souls as they are those things by which the Soul is profited.

3. But thirdly, there is a further sweetness, that the Word, and Ordinances of God have to a gracious Soul, as they are *pure and holy*, Psal. 119. v. 140. *Thy word is very pure, therefore doth thy servant love it.* The heart of man (naturally) doth not love purity, but the Spiritual heart that is conformed to the image of God loves it. It is turned into the likeness of the word, and made to love whatsoever is holy and Spiritual and pure. This makes the Rafters, and beams of the Church, to the true Christian to be like Cedar and Fir, sweet smelling, because of that purity, and holiness which cleaveth to them.

4. A fourth thing which the Proposition predicateth of the Word and Ordinances of God, is their duration, *they are of an incorruptible Nature*, as *Cedar* and *Fir*, or *Pine*: Not subject to corruption, and putrefaction as other sorts of wood are, *Isa.* 40. *v.* 8. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but *the Word of God shall stand for ever.* Our Saviour speaketh to this purpose, Heaven and Earth shall pass away, *but one jot or tittle of the Law shall not pass away until all these be fulfilled.* I will open this a little.

1. The *Ordinances of the Gospel endure for ever.* Herein the excellency of the Gospel dispensation appeareth, above the legal dispensation. The Law brought nothing to perfection (saith the Apostle to the *Hebrews*) the Ordinances of worship under the Law were but shadows and types which ceased when Christ who was the substance of those shadows, and the *Antitype* to those *types*, once appeared in the World, or at least when he dyed, but the Ordinances which are as the beams and Rafters of the Gospel Church are durable and do not pass away. The Jewish Priesthood ceased, But the Gospel Ministry continues, Christ hath promised to be with them to the *End of the World*, God hath given *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints until we all come in the Unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.* The Passover was to continue but for a time, until the Messiah (who was the true paschal Lamb) should be slain for the sins of his People, but the Ordinance of the Lords

Eph. 4 11,12.

Supper

Supper (which comes instead of this) is an Ordinance by which *we shew the death of Christ* until *his coming again*, 1 *Cor.* 11.

2. *The word of God in particular indureth for ever.* I will open this in two things,

1. The *Propositions of the word indure for ever.* They are *Propositions of Eternal truth*, whether they be *Dogmatical Propositions*, which assert the truth of God, concerning the Nature or will of God, or concerning the state of man, or any thing relating to his *duty*, or whether they be such as are *promisory*, they are of an immortal Nature, the reason is, because God is a God that changeth not, he is not Yea, and Nay, but Yea and Amen, a God that cannot lye to his People, nor repent of what he hath said unto them. The truth of the word abideth for ever.

2. The *vertue of the word abideth, and is immortal.* The same vertue which the word of God ever had in it to convince, convert, to enlighten, quicken support, comfort, the same is in it still, and indeed the proof of this dependeth partly upon the former, for the vertue of the word, whether it be the word of precept, or the word of promise, doth much depend upon the *truth of it.* Now the truth of it being perpetual, the vertue of it must also be so, supposing the same concurrence of that holy Spirit which must be to make the Word of any use or vertue at any time. I have spoken enough to the Explication of the point, I come now to the Application of it, which I shall dispatch, by drawing some speculative and practical Inferences from what you have heard.

Hence (in the first place) you may observe a great difference betwixt the *Legal* and the Gospel *Ministry*; And (consequently) the excellency of the latter above the former. The Apostle to the Hebrews insisteth much upon this, and by this argument proves the excellency of the Gospel above the Law. The Beams and Rafters of the Church under the law they were not of *Cedar*, they lasted no longer then until the time of reformation. The Evangelist *St.* John saith, *The Law was given by Moses, but grace, and truth came by Jesus Christ.* Two things commend the Gospel above the law. *Grace came by it, truth came by it.* The law brought wrath, the Doctrine of it tended to curse men and women, and to conclude all under wrath, but the Use 1. 1 Joh. 17.

Doctrine of the Gospel, brought grace, the news of the free pardon, and remission of sins, through the blood of Christ, & the acceptance of the Soul upon the account of his merits. *Truth* also came by Christ. Whether you take Truth for *Substance* and *Realities*, opposed to *types and shadows*, that came by Christ who was the End of the Law: Or whether you take *Truth* for *Certainty*, and that which hath in it *perpetuity* and *durableness*; that also came by Christ, who put an end to the Ceremonial law, which consisted of temporary Ordinances for worship, &c. It is true, the Doctrine of the Law and Gospel, the Propositions of truth, contained in both are much one and the same. The moral precepts the same, and the promises the same, &c. Yet that great Proposition of truth *De Messia venturo*, concerning the star that should come forth out of *Jacob*, the coming of *Shiloh*. The raising of the great Prophet like to *Moses*, &c. This Proposition, was perfected in the Gospel, and turned into another of far more comfort to us, *viz. That Christ is come*, and *hath dyed for our sins*, &c. But all the Propositions of the Gospel are of eternal truth, and all the Ordinances of the Gospel are like Beams of Cedar that shall never decay. That's the first Inference.

Use 2. 2. Observe from hence, *The blindness of many Peoples Eyes, and the hardness of our hearts*, together with the *unreasonableness of unbelief*. You have heard that there is a Beauty and a *sweetness* in the Word and Ordinances of God, they are beautiful to the Eye, and they are *sweet* unto the taste and to the smell; the lips of Christ drop *sweet smelling Myrrh*; what is the reason then that the most of People can taste no sweetness in them, nor see any beauty in them? Alas, the most men and women in the World have no more savour of a Sermon or Sacrament then in the white of an Egg. They see more beauty in a *play-book*, or an *history*, then they can see in the holy Word of God, the reason is this, they are void of *Spiritual senses*, they have their *exteriour carnal senses*, they can taste *sweetness* in an *Hony-Comb*, but they have not any Spiritual sense, they *can taste* no sweetness *in the Word of God*, which to *Davids* taste was sweeter then the Hony-comb. They must needs want Spiritual sense, for they want Spiritual life, they are *dead in trespasses and sins*: no sooner doth the Lord quicken a dead Soul, but it savoureth the things of God, and tasts that sweetness, and sees that beauty in the Word of God, and in the Ordinances of God of which I have been discoursing.

2. As

2. As it discovers the want of Spiritual sense, in an unbelievers Soul, so it also discovers the *hardness of mens hearts*. The Word and Ordinances of God, have a *power and Efficacy* in them, but alas! how few do they make any impression upon? But I shall not insist upon this as not so proper to the resemblance of the Text. Let me rather,

3. Infer the *unreasonableness of unbelief*, from what you have heard, of the *supporting power of the Word of God*. The *Word of God*, is the great supporter of Souls, under all afflictions, temptations, in all distresses and agonies, *&c.* God is indeed pleased as to some of his People to give them in *sensible evidences of his love*, sealing them up, (by way of assurance of his love) unto the day of redemption: and blessed are they who are in such a case, but this is not the portion of all the People of God, the most of Christians have nothing but the royal Word of God to trust to, and upon this all their hopes hang as to Eternity. And we are so carnal, that we find it an hard thing oft-times to keep up the building of grace, faith and hope, upon this foundation, but are ready to sway, and sink through distrust and doubtings, through unbelief, and anxiety of thoughts, *&c.* This is that which we call unbelief. The unreasonableness of which is sufficiently evidenced from the stability of the Word of God, it is a *Beam of Cedar*. Thou that thinkest it an hard thing, to have nothing but a bare Word of God to trust to, unless thou hast some sensible evidence, that canst not believe without a sign, consider,

1. That the Word is the *Beam* of the Church. The whole Church of God is built upon the Word; it is that which God hath judged sufficient at all times for his People: God the Father had no more than Christ's word for the price of all the Souls that were saved, from the beginning of the World, until the time of Christ's Death and Passion, (when the price was actually paid into God's hand.) All the Believers that were saved, from *Adam* till Christ's coming in the Flesh, had no more to trust to for their Salvation, than the Royal Word of God; *That the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpents head*: *That a Messiah should come and be slain to make reconciliation for iniquity*, &c. They all trusted on these words of God, and were saved.

2. Consider, This Beam is a *Beam of Cedar*; it is an *incorruptible thing*. The Apostle calls the Word and Oath of God two

immutable things: It must needs be so, because of the immutable Nature of God; he is a God that *cannot lye*, that cannot speak that which is false; he is a God that cannot *repent*; he cannot, like man, *eat his word*, or recede from it. *David* saith, That *the Word of the Lord is settled in the Heavens.* The Grass may wither, and the Flower may fade, but the Word of the Lord must stand for ever. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle thereof cannot fail. Hath he said it, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken it, and *shall not* he bring it to pass? The Apostle calls the word of Prophecy a *sure Word.* The word of Prophecy is sure, and the word of Promise is sure, therefore trust to it.

3. It is a *Beam that never yet brake*; never Soul miscarried that trusted its whole weight upon it. What greater Arguments can any have to perswade his Soul to trust to the Word of God, than these two.

First; *That the Nature of the word is such that it cannot fail.* The truth of God cannot be turned into a lye.

Secondly; *That no instance can be produced of any Soul that miscarried in its confidence.* Look over all the Book of God, and find me Gods Word given to any Soul, for any thing, whether temporal, or spiritual, and it was not made good unto him: indeed *the Visions* have sometime tarried beyond the patience of God's People, but they have alwaies been fulfilled in their seasons.

4. Consider how *unreasonable a thing it is, that thou shouldest trust to the word of a man*, and distrust the *Word of a God*? You think your selves concerned to trust in the *Royal word of a King*, in the serious word of a Noble Person, in the word of an ordinary Friend who is but accounted morally honest, how unreasonable a thing then is it, that thou shouldest not take the word of a God, the word of him who cannot lye? To sum up this then Christian, what though thou hast nothing but the word of God to trust to, either for those things which concern thee as to this Life, or for those things which concern thee as to another Life; yet the Word of God is enough; it is the Beam of *Christ's House*, and it is a Beam of Cedar, which cannot corrupt or putrifie, nor fail for ever. Nor indeed

5. Is that *Assurance* (of things not seen) which God gives to any Soul, any thing more than the sealing, and particular application of the Word. In the mean time, it is the Word that supports and upholds the Soul. The sealing of the Spirit adds no new

strength

ſtrength to the Word, only helps me to bear my ſelf upon it.

3. Is there ſuch a *Beauty*, *Sweetneſs*, *Strength* and *Power*, and ſuch an *incorruptible* and *immortal Nature* in the Word of God, and in the *Ordinances of God*? Oh that theſe things might commend them more to all you that hear me this day! Under this head let me plead with you for theſe things.

1. *For a knowledge and underſtanding of, and an acquaintance with the Word of God.* Let the beauty of an Object be never ſo perfect, it pleaſeth not me, if I look not upon it, or looking upon it, do not obſerve and underſtand it! Let the *ſweetneſs of an Object be never ſo great*, it affords me no pleaſure unleſs I taſt it. Let the power and efficacy of a thing be never ſo much, it is nothing to me if I make no application of my ſelf to it, or it to me. And in very deed this is the reaſon why the moſt poor Souls ſee no beauty, underſtand no ſweetneſs in the Word of God, why they feel nothing of the power and ſtrength of it, becauſe they ſeldom look into it; or if they read in it, and attend upon it, they obſerve not what they read and hear; they underſtand not the Myſteries of the Goſpel; they make no appplications of the Word of God to their Souls, nor of their Souls to the Word, and try not the ſtrength of it: Oh let the Word of God be precious to you! Read it, and read it over and over again, thou wilt every time diſcern ſome ſweetneſs in it, which before thou didſt not diſcern; hear it, and hear it often; obſerve what thou readeſt, and what thou heareſt; get underſtanding in the Lord's Statutes; make application of the Word to thy Soul, and of thy Soul to the Word. When thou art in ſtraights as to thy outward condition, or as to thy ſpiritual condition, thou wilt then find this *ſweetneſs*, *beauty*, *power* and *efficacy* in the *Word*, which till that time affords but matter of diſcourſe to thee.

2. Let this plead with you for a *due Attendance upon Ordinances*. The *Word*, the *Sacraments*, every Ordinance of the Goſpel, they are the *Beams and Rafters of the Church*, which deſerve all your care and diligence to uphold and maintain, and to keep up in their perfect ſtrength, glory and beauty: They are *Beams of Cedar, and Rafters of Fir*; they have a ſweetneſs, beauty and excellency in them; and this beauty and excellency which is in them, will not be diſcerned by the Soul that neglects its Attendance upon them.

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Page 9 line 13. read *should me*, p. 18 l. 26. r. *we call*, p. 29 l. 26. r. *quarrel the*. p. 31. l. 34. r. *Christ, by that of*, p. 47. l. 18. r. *such* subitam, &c p. 73. l. 2. r. *nothing more than that*. p. 79. l. 1. r. *can find*, p. 85. l. 23. r. *from us, by*, p. 87. l. 40. r. *keep them*, p. 88. l. 1. r. *of themselves*, and l. 22 r. *expose us*, p. 105. l. 9. r. *excuse. For*, p. 116. l. 9. r. *room left*, p. 117. l. 7. r. *chapter or*, p. 129. l. 24. r. *when that is*, p. 130. l. 28. *after himself*, add, *can promise himself to meet him*, p. 144. l. 3. r. *to such*, p. 147. l. 1. r. *only so far*, p. 154. l. 32. r. *it fareth*, l. 35. r *more hated*, p. 150. l. 26. r. *you that*, l. 39. r. *to you*, p. 169. l. 13. r. *abate a cup*, p. 185. l. 24. r. *It is desire*, p. 136. l. 19 r. *is the use*, l. 36. r. *is observable*, p. 248. l. 22. r. *exult* p. 268 l. 34. r. *out of God*, p. 289. l. 12. blot out, *For altho*, p. 307. l. 7. r. *make peace*, p. 341. l. 20. r. *they are*, p. 351. l. 4. r. *not know*, p. 438. l. 36. r. *signifie*, p. 472. l. 29. r. *the Rod of God*. p. 479. l. 33 r. *the fruit*, p. 487. l. 7. r. *is much*, p. 491. l. 21. r. *Ezek.* 16 8. p. 498. l. 4. r. *he must not tell a lye to cover his own*, p. 506. l. 4. r. *in it, lyes*, p. 513 l. 36, 37. blot out, *For one to come to him*, p. 516. l. 16. r. *a Christian to consider his*, p. 550. l. 27. r. *it getteth*, p. 566. l. 31. r. *its ends* p. 614. l. 6. r. *their ordinary*, p. 618. l. 11. r. *then others*, p. 626. l. 1. r. *understand*, p. 628. l. 2. r. *God cannot*, p. 629. l. 13. r. *command. On*, l. 16. r. *not lawful*, l. 32. r. *St.* Paul *saith*, l. 33. r. *But I observe* p. 630. l. 17. r. *every good Soul*, p. 631. l. 10. r. ædificans, l. 14. r. *not lay*, p. 636 l. 18. r. *of such*, p. 657. l. 28. r. *is so, is evident*, p. 659. l. 39. r. *Ezek.* 16. 30. p. 680. l. 40 r. *we must own*, p. 734. l. 31. r. *not so much*. p. 768. l. 29. r. *respecteth*, p. 780. l. 27. r. *as mix love natural*, p. 802. l. 23. r. *or a woman*, l. 27. r. *and so*, p. 812. l. 21. r. *them reasonably*, p. 813. l. 38. r. *being rational*, p. 816 l. 8. r. *meerly reasonable*, p. 832. l. 1. r. *evidenced from*, p. 841. l. 9. r. *take them*, p. 849. l. 27. r. *to us*, p. 871. l. 23. r. *internal cause*. p 873. l. 39. r. *a power upon him: but*, p. 882. l. 40. r. *Prophet, foretelling*, p. 886. l. 36. r. *not exclusive*, p. 888. l. 19. r. *were added*, p. 901. l. 3. r. verbum audibile, p. 903. l. 34. r. *which is pleasant.*

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FINIS.



Mans but a shadow, and a Picture is
That shadow's shadow yet dont judge amiss.
Though here you onely on the shadow look
What followes read. The Substance is i'th' book.

THE INTERCOURSES OF DIVINE LOVE BETWIXT Christ and his Church.

OR The Particular Believing Soul.

Metaphorically expressed by *Solomon* in the *first Chapter* of the *Canticles*, or *Song* of *Songs*.

Opened and Applied in several Sermons, upon that whole Chapter.

In which the *Excellencies of Christ*, the *yernings of his bowels* towards *Believers*, under various circumstances, the *workings of their hearts* towards, and in, *communion with him*, with many other *Gospel Propositions* of great import to Souls, are handled.

By *John Collinges*, D. D.

Solomon divinitus inspiratus, Christi, & Ecclesiæ laudes & æterni Connubii recinit Sacramenta, simulq; expressit sanctæ desiderium animæ, & Epithalamii carmen exultans in spiritu jucundo composuit Elogio, figurato tamen. Nimirum videbat & ipse instar Moysis faciem suam, non minus forsitan in hâc parte fulgentem, eo quod illo adhuc in tempore, nemo, aut rarus erat, qui revelatâ facie, gloriam illam speculari sufficeret. Bernardus 1 Serm. in Cantica.

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THE INTERCOURSES OF DIVINE LOVE

To the Lady

Ann Knightley.

Madam,

AMongst the many *Spiritual mercies* by which within these fifty years last past, *England* hath been *exalted to heaven* (as our Saviour said of *Capernaum*) the plenty of *good Books* hath not been the least, so as there is hardly any point in *Divinity*, which hath not been *judiciously* handled, both *dogmatically*, *polemically*, and *practically*, and discourses upon it published in our own Tongue. The things hid in times of *Popery*, yea and for many years in the beginning of *our Reformation*, have been made known; the things *covered* have been *revealed*; what was at first spoken in *darkness*, hath been told *in the light*, *preached upon the house tops*; and so published, that all those who would might *read*, and *understand*. Certainly no Nation under Heaven (of which we have any record) was ever blessed with the Means of Grace to that degree, none ever had more *judicious Interpretations of the Word of God*, nor more *serious* and *faithful Applications* of it to the *Consciences* of men and women, so as if either the *Doctrine* or *Duty* of the *Gospel* be yet hid to any, it is much to be feared that it is to such only who shall perish. But of all good Books we have been *exalted* in none more than those which have bin wrote on practical Subjects, Books of all others to be most highly valued, as more immediately serving the great end of man, in shewing him the way of Salvation, directing his coming to Christ, and walking with him, of which we have had such plenty, as indeed there would be no more need of writing on such Subjects, if the *Vanity* of our Natures did not more incline us to a *discourse* upon the same *Argument* newly wrote, than to what hath been written as well some years since, by which means, the *multiplying* of good Books doth not a little contribute to the *much reading* of good Books, and that I am sure contributes much both to *knowledge* and *practice* (the two great ends that every *Preacher* ought to aim at;) so as I cannot be of their mind who would have no more written of this nature, because so much hath been already wrote, any more than I can be of theirs, who think there is now no such need of *Preaching*, because formerly there hath been so much. So long as there are any Souls in the World, who *know*

not Christ, and live not up to the *Rules of his Gospel*, there will be need both of the one and of the other; nay, were there none such, there would be need of it, to keep up the *Grace of God* bestowed upon men in it, *warm exercise*. Nor methinks should there be one *Preacher of the Gospel* who should not publish the glad tidings of it, and leave some *Record* to the Ages to come, of his faithfulness in that work. The *Riches of Divine Grace* can never be too much published, we can never enough declare his love, who *for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*. Such like thoughts as these, *Madam*, have brought these Discourses into a more publick light: They were composed many years since, soon after my entrance into the publick Ministry. I am willing they should be a *Testimony* to the world, what Doctrine I then Preached, and see no cause yet to be ashamed of, and what scope or design I have always propounded to my self: The *Gospel of the Kingdom*; *Christ*, *The faithful saying, worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*, 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. The Apostles *Doctrine*, Acts, 4. 12. *That there is no Salvation in any other* then in Christ, *for there is no other name under Heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved*, were the great things, I took my self concerned as a Preacher to publish to the world. Together with what our Saviour hath taught us, *That he who believeth him is not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned already —— shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, Joh. 3. 18. 36, and that *Faith without works is dead*. These were the great things I had in my eye, to open, explain, and apply to people. My apprehension that I saw much of these things revealed in the *Song of Solomon* (though clouded under *Metaphorical expressions*) was that which led me to the study of that difficult portion of holy Writ, than which undoubtedly there is no portion of the Old Testament more *Evangelical*, according to the common *Hypothesis* agreed by the most valuable Divines in all Ages, *viz. That it contains a Dialogue between Christ and his Church, or particular believing Souls in it*. If any think I might have chosen plainer Texts from which to discourse these things, I freely yield it as to many of them. But shall this excellent Book, always acknowledged a sacred portion of holy Writ, by the wisest man upon earth stiled the *Song of Songs* (that is the most excellent Song) lie by us as the *Vision of a Book that is sealed*, or be bound up in our Bibles for nothing? Or can there be any work more worthy of a *Divine*, than to attempt

tempt the clearing of so incomparable a piece of *Divine Revelation* from that *darkness* which it pleased God to cloath it with in a time, when the most which he spake concerning Christ, was in *Types* or *Prophecies*, or *Metaphors*. *Time*, together with the *Sermons* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, have expounded the *Types* and *Prophecies* of Christ. Is it not a work worthy of us to explain the *Metaphors*, that we might have a Christ wholly unveiled? There's no great fear of any dangerous erring in the case, if he that explaineth taketh care, that his *Explication* agreeth with plainer Revelations. *Madam*, I think I may further say, that there is no portion of holy Writ so copiously as this, expressing the infinite love, and transcendent excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. None that more copiously instructs us, what he will be to us, or what we should be toward him, and consequently none more worthy of the pains of any who desires to *Preach Christ*. My Meditations upon the second Chapter composed in my maturer years, were published some years since: Those upon this Chapter have (being done in my younger time) staid, till I could get some leisure to peruse them my self, and correct some things in the stile, especially (our juvenile fancies, seldom pleasing us in our maturer years.) You will, I hope, *Madam*, pardon my *Dedication* of them to your *Ladyship*: Your self knows how great *Obligations* you have laid upon me: I cannot answer them: These are all the Requitals we can make our Friends for their kindnesses. *Silver and gold I have none*, but what I have I humbly present your *Ladyship* with; nor shall I have been wholly unserviceable to your *Ladyship* in your highest concerns, if any thing in these Discourses shall help further to inflame your Soul with love to him who is *the chiefest of ten thousand*, and contribute to the sending of your Soul to Heaven in the *admiration* of *your Beloved*, where you shall *see him as he is*, whom these Discourses will but shew you as *in a glass darkly*. *Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

April 2. 1683.

Your Ladiships most humble Servant,
JOHN COLLINGES.

To

TO THE
READER.

SOme few years since, I was prevailed with to publish some discourses upon the Second Chapter of this excellent Song. I had then by me these upon the first Chapter, but they being composed in my younger years, I was desirous first to peruse them, before I suffered them to come forth into the World, since which time I have had so little rest that the perusal of them hath taken up much longer time than I then thought upon. The publishing of my discourses upon the Second Chapter first obliged me to take something out of these discourses, to make those as intelligible as I could, concerning the Penman, of the Book, and the Nature form, and stile of it, which I have here restored to their due place with some advantage (all those things falling in to the handling of the first verse) I am not, upon the persual of notes composed so many years since, my self much pleased with the largeness of my discourses upon the five or six first verses, occasioned from the variety of Propositions raised from them, but there are couched in those verses some very great points, and my consulting so many expositors as I did, together with my proneness to suspect my own judgment rather then those whom I had reason to prefer before my self, was the cause of that. Nor did I think it much material, if I saw a Proposition offered me by any valuable interpreter as founded on one of those verses, which I saw was a Proposition of truth, and justifiable from other Scripture, whether it were certainly there founded or no, for he pretends to too much skill, that will be too positive in giving the sense of a metaphor in this or that Text. It is enough for a modest Interpreter to give a probable sense of such expressions, and to prove it from a plainer Revelation. I hope thou wilt be so charitable to me, as to think that I troubled not a Popular auditory, with all that thou wilt find here in the opening of the several verses. I bless God I was never so idle as to make up discourses to people of what I knew they did not understand. What I found in my notes put in for my own Satisfaction I have let go, not knowing but my book might fall into the hands of some Scholar, who might be able to judge from what Satisfied me, upon what grounds I formed such Propositions of truth as I did from the several verses so preparing the matter of more Popular, and practical discourse. I bless God I always looked upon the work of the ministry, as the most

moſt grave, and ſerious employment under Heaven, whether the Miniſter ſpeaks with reference to explication *or* application. *In the firſt he acts as an* Interpreter, *making the words of the eternal God, more plain, and intelligible to the infirm capacityes of his people. How great is that work to be the Lords* Interpreter? *In the latter he acts as an* Ambaſſador, *perſuading, and offering terms of peace between God, and man, and uſing all his art in intreating men to be reconciled to God.* Who is ſufficient for theſe things? *As to the former we have no more accommodate means, then ſearching the* Original *texts, comparing the uſage of words in one Text with the uſage of them in others, conſulting Interpreters who have gone before us, then uſing our own judgments, as to what they have ſaid, or our own thoughts ſhall further ſuggeſt to us; thou wilt diſcern that this is the method I have uſed, and if in any thing I have been miſtaken, I have erred neither* wilfully *nor* ſingly. *When I had examined the ſeveral verſes, my work was to raiſe* Propoſitions *from them ſo interpreted, to open them, to juſtify them to be divine truths from other places of plainer* Revelation. *For my* method, *and* ſtile, *it is what I judged moſt accommodate to the end of my work. No man diſcourſeth to any length upon a ſubject without a* method, *ſome uſe a* Cryptick method, *which is only for their* own conduct, *others a plainer* method *for the advantage of others, the former may do well enough in the Schools, where the end is only to raiſe ſome ſubitaneous affections; I never thought it proper for the Pulpit, where the Preachers end is or ſhould be, to inform his People in the great things of God, and to affect their hearts, and in order to it he is bound to ſpeak with the beſt advantage both for their* memories *and* underſtandings, *thou wilt find I have kept to the ordinary plain method of* explication, *confirmation, and application.* No man having drank old wine deſireth new, for he ſaith, the old is better. *In the proof of* Propoſitions *I have rather ſtudied the evidence of holy writ, and Scriptural reaſon, then other more incertain* Topicks, *knowing it the duty of Miniſters to take care, that the faith of their people, may* not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but in the power of God. *One plain Text of holy Writ more confirms a* Propoſition *of* Divine truth *to an underſtanding Chriſtian, then an hundred rational arguments. For my ſtile it was the leaſt of my ſtudy, my Opinion always was that what* Auguſtine *calls* diligens negligentia, *was the beſt diligence as to that; while I was yet a very young man I had learn'd out of him, that it was no Soleciſm in a Preacher to uſe* oſſum *for* os, *for* (*ſaith he*) an Iron key *is* better then one made of gold, if it will better open the door, *for that is all the uſe of the key. I had learn'd out of*

Hierom,

Hierom, *that a gaudry of phrases, and words in a Pulpit is but* Signum insipientiæ. *The words of a Preacher; saith he, ought* pungere, non palpare, *to prick the heart, not to smooth and coax. The work of an Orator is too precarious for a Minister of the Gospel.* Gregory *observed that our Saviour hath not stiled us* the sugar *but* the salt of the Earth, *and* Augustine *observeth, that though* Cyprian *in one Epistle shewed much of a florid Orator, to shew he could do it, yet he never would do so any more, to shew he would not. The study of words, the right placing of them for their better chiming,* &c. *I always thought a* puerile, *and* pedantick thing, *fitter for a School boy, then a minister of the Gospel. Honest Souls when they come to hear the word do not come to see* Reeds shaken with the wind of *Ostentation and Vain-glory, nor yet to see* men clothed with the soft rayment *of fine expressions and phrases, (which for the most part like such clothes have least efficacy to warm a Soul, or to keep it in any Religious heat) they come to* hear a Prophet, *yea* more then a Prophet, *a man that shall reveal the mind and will of God to them. To me the most tunable tongues in Pulpits, always ring most awke. It is beneath the gravity of a Preacher to tickle a wanton Ear. The end of all words is but to convey to our minds the knowledg of things, and those are the best words that do that best,* grandia granditer dicenda. *I never thought my self further concern'd as to words, then to speak intelligibly, and so as through no rudeness or indecency of phrase to make Persons nauseate my discourse who had a just Reverence for divine things. Words will always follow matter, but* matter *doth not always attend words. I bless God I early discerned and avoided this trifling, rather desiring to humble that stile which was at my tongues end, then to strain my tongue to a dialect which I either thought my People understood not, or was beneath the greatness of the subjects of my discourse. If any think the portion of Scripture undertaken in these discourses not fit for a Preacher, they should do well to consider, whether it be not a portion of holy writ, and such a portion as the eminentest Divines in all ages, and of all persuasions have thought worthy their pains to inquire the sense of. Having thus far Apologized for the following discourses I leave them to thy candor and judgment, begging Gods blessing upon them to thy Souls advantage,*

JOHN COLLINGES.

April 3.
1683.

The

The *First Chapter* of the *Song of Solomon* paraphrased, and turned into English *Meeter*, so as it may be Sung in the *Ordinary Tunes*, in which the *English Psalms* are sung.

I.

THE *Kisses* of *thy Mouth* (Dear Lord)
Let my Soul only have,
No Earthly thing I do desire,
No worlds fine things I crave.
Let me thy *Gospel Doctrines* have,
By them O speak to me
So by thy Grace, that I in them
Thy special Love may see.

V. 2.
Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

Of thy mouth.

II.

A *Kiss* Lord! is but a small thing,
But a Love-token 'tis,
The Least of that is Sweet to me,
Lord grant me but a kiss.
One Kiss is sweet, but not enough:
Let me more kisses have;
My wants are more than one, therefore
More Kisses I do crave.

Kisses pl.

III.

Thou hast varieties of Grace
My Soul of wants as much:

For thy loves are better then Wine.

As are my wants, my dearest Lord,
O Let thy Loves be such.
Drunkards are pleas'd with wine, but I
In it no taste can find.
O Let me only know, that thou
To my poor soul art kind.

V. 3.

Because of the savour of thy good Ointments: thy name is as an ointment poured forth.

IV.

The knowledge thou hast given my soul
How much thy Loves are worth,
Above created things is that
Alone which draws it forth
In breathings after Thee. Thy Name
Is Ointment poured out,
Which with its fragrant smell perfumes
The places it about.

Therefore do the Virgins love thee.

V.

Therefore the Virgins do thee love.
The undefiled mind
Can satisfaction no where else,
But in thee only find.
Every such Virgin will thee love
And thee alone desire.
Thy sweetest Ointments fuel are
To feed that sacred fire.

V. 4.

Draw me, we will run after thee.

VI.

Lord I should come to thee: thou art
The term to which I move;
I should (O Lord!) run after thee
In the scent of thy love.
But I can neither run nor come
Unless thou first me draw.
Either my lusts do me seduce,
Or Satan doth me aw.

Draw me.

VII.

O put forth thine Almighty hand,
Let power, and love constrain

My feeble Soul to follow thee,
And with thee to remain.
Lay hand O Lord ! upon my will,
Then I shall willing be :
Put strength into my legs and I
Shall then run after thee.

VIII.

Lord move me first, then I shall move — *Run.* —
And stand no longer still,
Yea I shall move with strength to do
What is thy sacred will :
I shall not only move, but run,
Make hast, and not delay,
To keep thy precepts, if that thou
Wilt help me in my way.

IX.

It shall be then my meat and drink
To do what thou requirest.
Thou Lord shalt then of me receive
Whatever thou desirest.
I shall nor faint, nor weary be,
But persevering run,
Until the race be finished,
Which my soul hath begun.

X.

My Lord ! not I alone, but mine
Shall also follow thee : — *We will run.*
I shall make known thy ways to all
That shall converse with me.
Sinners by my example shall
Be turned to thy Grace,
When they shall hear, how thou to me
Hast shewn thy pleasant face.

XI.

My Soul melts, I did speak but now
The King hath answered. — *The King hath brought*
 And *me into his Chambers :*

we will be glad, and ejoice in thee. ---

And me into his Chambers brought,
Unto his Royal Bed:
How doth my heart, now leap for joy?
How is my countenance glad?
My soul can now despond no more,
It can no more be sad.

XII.

In thee, O Lord, I will be glad,
Thou art my only joy;
Thy Loves I will remember, when
New troubles me annoy.
The savour of the worlds sweet wines
Is a poor transient thing.
But I shall ne're (I trust) forget
The Love of Christ my King.

--- We will remember thy loves more then Wine.

XIII.

In him all things excelling dwell,
They 've chosen him their throne;
TheSaints will him sincerely love,
And will love him alone:
The more upright the greater love
They to the Lord shall bring.
Who loves them with the greatest love,
And is the Lord their King.

Upright things, or Uprightnesses love thee.

XIV.

V. 5.
I am black but comely, O you Daughters of Hierusalem *! as the Tents of* Kedar; *as the Curtains of* Solomon.

You Daughters of *Hierusalem*
The City of my God,
You who in the same Church with me
Have taken your abode,
Upbraid me not, that I am like
The Coverings upon
Black *Kedars* Tents. I'm also like
Curtains of *Solomon*.

XV.

I black am *from my self*, but am
By *Imputation* white.

By th' *first birth* I am black and dark,
But; by a *new birth* Light:
I *black* am in your curious Eye.
And in my own much more;
But *white* in my *Beloveds* sight
Since he hath paid my score.

I am black but comely.

XVI.

Look not *on me* because I'm black.
With a too *curious Eye.*
Nor *with disdain*, nor let my black.
Visage you *satisfy*:
Much less dis-colour you, Behold
(Sisters!) and pity me,
My *Blackness* is not my delight.
Ah! 'tis my misery.

V. 6.
Look not upon me because I am black.

XVII.

The Sun hath scorch'd me with its heat.
It is by that I am tann'd,
My Mothers Children also have
Touch'd me with unkind hand. (tend;
Their Vineyard they would have me at-
Mine own I did not keep.
The envious one hath collied me
While I thus lay asleep.

Because the Sun hath looked upon me: my Mothers Children were angry with me. They made me the Keeper of their Vineyards, but my own I have not kept.

XVIII.

What Souls will not Afflictions tann,
If they be sharp and long?
Or who is not discolour'd by
Temptations, if too strong?
Worldly distractions spoil the look
Of a Religious mind,
But ah! through negligence I have
Been to my self unkind.

XIX.

But O thou whom my soul loves best,
Tell me where thou doest use

V. 7.
Tell me O thou whom my soul loveth, where

At

thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.

At noon to feed thy flock. At noon
Do not my Soul refuse.
When as Afflictions scorch me most
Be thou at hand to me,
And teach my Soul at such a time
How it may come to thee.

XX.

At noon, [the time when Shepheards are most at leisure.]

For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy Companions.

O thou Shepheard of *Israel*,
Let me but know the hour,
When most of thee I may enjoy,
Tast most thy Grace and Power.
By th' flocks of thy Companions,
I would not turn aside.
With thee alone I would converse;
Be thou (O Lord!) my guide.

V. 8.

If thou know not O thou fairest amongst Women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy Kids besides the Shepheards Tents.

XXI.

Thou fairest she! dost thou not know
Where me at noon to see?
The footsteps of the flock will teach
Thee the right way to me.
Feed by the Shepheards Tents, for there
I shall most surely abide;
The Shepheards that derive from me
Shall be to thee a guide.

V. 9.

I have compared thee O my Love, to a company of Horses in Pharaoh's *Chariots.*

XXII.

I have compar'd my love unto
The goodly company
Of Horses which King *Pharaoh* draw,
Made strong by Unity:
Of Horses which march on to meet
The armed men, and ne're
Do from the glittering Sword turn head;
But mock at Cowards fear.

XXIII.

V. 10.

Thy Cheeks are comely, with rowes of Jewels;

Thy Cheeks (my Love!) are comely made
With rowes of Jewels given

Thee;

Thee, by my self: Thy lovely neck
Adorn'd with Chains from Heaven.
I will yet give thee further grace
Borders of Gold I'le make,
And spots of Silver thou shalt have
And for thine own them take.

thy neck with Chains of Gold.

V. 11.

We will make thee borders of Gold with studs of Silver.

XXIV.

O may my dearest Royal Lord
From's Table never stir.
How sweetly doth my spikenard smell
While's that he sitteth there.
Even his own Graces will not smell
When he is gone from me;
His Grace in me doth daily need
His Royal company.

V. 12.

While the King sitteth at his Table: my spikenard sends forth the smell thereof.

XXV.

My well-beloved is to me
Myrrh, in a bundle tyed.
More precious, medicinal, and sweet
Than all the world beside.
Betwixt my Breasts he shall have place,
There he shall alwaies lye;
It is the place for posies. There
I will this bundle tye.

V. 13.

A bundle of Myrrh is my beloved unto me, he shall lye all night betwixt my breasts.

XXVI.

Engaddi's Vineyards have their plants
Of *Camphire* [*Cypress.*] All
Are names too short for me whereby
My *Dearest Lord* to call.
My sweet companion! thou art fair,
Thou lookest with Doves Eyes,
Eyes which both meek, and harmless are,
Not sparkling Cruelties.

V. 14.

My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire [or Cypress] *in the Vineyards of* Engaddi.

V. 15.

Behold thou art fair my Love, behold thou art fair, thou hast Doves Eyes.

XXVII.

Thou hast a satisfyed Soul,
A rich, contented mind,

A plain and clean, and lowly heart
Which is to others kind,
A tender heart, a mournful Eye,
Exceeding quick. These are
The things which make me say again,
Thou art exceeding fair.

V. 16.
Behold thou art fair my Beloved, yea pleasant—

XXVIII.

Nay (my Beloved!) thou art fair
My beauty is to thee
As nothing, worse than nothing, 'tis
But meer deformity.
Thou fair art, and pleasant too,
Thy conversation's sweet.
Thrice happy souls to walk with thee
Whom thou dost please t' admit.

Our Bed is green.

XXIX.

When thou within my bed dost lodge,
How soon it waxeth green?
When thou art gone, no fruitfulness
In it at all is seen.
Not a good work at such a time,
Can my poor soul produce,
Not an heart chang'd in Churches, when
Thou art not in the Pewes.

V. 17.
The Beams of our house are Cedar, and our rafters are Fir.

XXX.

The Beams and rafters of thy house
Of Cedar are, and Fir.
Sweet, beautiful, and strong they are,
Such as shall never stir.
Thy word, and Ordinances Lord,
Support thy Church for ever.
O let my Sins within thy house
Me sever from it never.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

MY deareſt Lord! I'm like the *Roſe*
Which *Sharons* fields doth grace:
Like th' *Lilly* of the Vallies, which
Doth beautify its place:
A flower, and the nobleſt flower
Which in the Fields doth grow;
My ſtructure, ſmell, and fruitfulneſs,
Thy Workmanſhip all ſhow.

V. 1.
I am the Roſe of Sharon, *the Lilly of the Vallies.*

II.

But Lord! I dwell i'th' common field,
And in the Vallies there.
To winds, and weather I'm expoſed:
I live in daily fear,
Leſt *Sharons* herds would me devour,
Or tread me under-foot:
And leave me nought to ſpeak me thine,
But only a true root.

III.

As Lillies are amongſt the Thorns,
So I my Love do ſee.
The Daughters of the peeviſh world
Are grievous Thorns to thee.
Yet thou art lovely there, and thriveſt,
The ugly Thorns commend
My faireſt Love, and do improve
Her while they do her rend.

V. 2.
As the Lilly among Thorns, ſo is my Love amongſt the Daughters.

V. 3.

As the Apple Tree amongſt the Trees of the Wood: ſo is my beloved among the Sons: I ſat down under his ſhadow, with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſt.

IV.

My deareſt Lord it is enough,
Amongſt Thorns let me be;
If while I ſtand there thou wilt be
A ſhadow unto me.
Amongſt the barren Trees in Woods
Let me converſe, if I
Thee as an Apple Tree may have,
That there I do not die.

V.

Thy ſhade, thy pleaſant fruit ſhall be
To me enough for food:
And for protection too, while I
Traverſe th'untrodden wood.
I like an *Hermite* ſit, and ſing;
Thy Apples to my taſt
Do much excel what other Trees
Afford the world for maſt.

His fruit, &c.

VI.

God manifeſted in the fleſh;
O how exceeding ſweet?
When infinite, and finite did
In one Redeemer meet.
Thy ſuffering being tempted is,
When tempted, my relief.
Satan would rob me of my all,
Thou haſt diſarm'd the Thief.

His fruit, &c.

VII.

Lord thy compleat obedience
Unto thy Fathers will,
Is all relieves me, when I think
How often I do ill,
While I do good. But O thy death!
Who can deſcribe that fruit?
Which all my ſoul neceſſities
Exceeds while it doth ſuit,

VIII.

VIII.

Thy Reſurrection, thine aſcending
Unto thy Fathers Throne:
Thy ſitting there, at his Right Hand
Thine interceſſion:
How ſweet they are? And then to think
That thou again wilt come
To Judgment, not me to condemn,
But only fetch me home.

IX.

Thine Ordinances Lord, in which
Thy loves thou doſt diſplay,
The Hony, and the Hony-Comb,
Are not ſo ſweet as they.
The Spirits ſacred fruit, thoſe ſweet
Influxes of thy Grace,
Are what alone me patient make
Of ſublunary place.

Thy fruit, &c.

X.

Theſe things my houſe of mourning turn
Into an houſe of Wine; (drop,
Wine not which from Earths Grapes doth
But from thee, the true Vine.
Thy Love O Lord thy Banner is
O're me, and makes men ſee;
Men who thee hate, I do'nt belong
Unto their company.

V. 4.
He brought me to the banquetting houſe, and his banner over me was Love.

XI.

Thy Loves thy Banner, teaching me
Where to reſort, when move;
When I fight for a Victory,
Then I diſplay thy Love:
'Tis that unites me unto thee,
And every one that's thine,
Where e're thoſe colours I but ſee,
I run to them as mine.

His banner, &c.

XII.

Protection I from them expect.
Mine Enemies are afraid,
As soon as they see over me
Thy Banners are displaid.
You Daughters of *Hierusalem*,
My heart is sick for love,
I cannot live without your help,
O to my poor soul move.

V. 5. *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am sick of Love.*

XIII.

My dearest Lord hath left with you,
Flaggons, and Apples too.
O reach me something lest I dye;
Unto the Scriptures go,
Out of those Fats draw out some Wine,
And quickly bring it me:
Bring me his Apples, why should you
Your Lords Spouse dying see?

XIV.

V. 6. *His left hand is under my head: and his right hand doth imbrace me.*

I shall not dye, but live, for he
Hath put under my head
His left hand, or his right hand shall
Imbrace me in my bed:
'Tis he alone my aking head
Can hold, and give relief:
They'r his imbraces only can,
Assuage my poor souls grief.

XV.

How ready is he me to help!
I did but cry, he heard:
His left hand hath secured me,
As to the thing I fear'd:
His right Hand soon shall follow it,
And wholly me release:
His right, and left hand both shall join
My love sick soul to ease.

XVI.

XVI.

O Daughters of *Hieruſalem*,
I charge you by the Roes,
And by the Hinds, the friendly Hinds,
Which ſo much love diſcloſe
One to another; Do'nt provoke
My Love, till he withdraw;
By my example wiſdom learn,
Sin not, but ſtand in awe.

V. 7.

I charge you O you Daughters of Hieruſalem, *by the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that you ſtir not up, nor awake my Love until he pleaſe.*

XVII.

You live amongſt the *Roes and Hinds*,
Learn not their wantonneſs.
You'l want the hand of my dear Lord,
When you are in diſtreſs.
Judgment for Sin will come as faſt,
As if the *Roes* it brought.
Do not ſtir up your Lord at reſt,
By one rebellious thought.

XVIII.

Hark! it is my Beloved's voice:
He comes, he comes to me,
Leaping upon the Mountains, him
Skipping upon th' Hills I ſee.
He's my Beloved, though not here,
I know his pleaſant voice,
And though I ſee him not, his ſound
Makes my heart to rejoice.

V. 8.

The voice of my beloved: Behold he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, and ſkipping upon the Hills.

XIX.

He comes; The Mountain of my Sins
I ſee lies in his way:
He leapeth o're that mountain, and
It cauſeth no delay.
He skippeth o're the little hills
Of Creatures oppoſition:
That he may come to my relief,
In my diſtreſt condition.

XX.

empty, *Orpah kisseth her Mother in law, and leaveth her, Naomi* would have had *Ruth* have done so too; but *v.* 16. *Ruth* refuseth, and tells her: *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy People shall be my People, and thy God shall be my God, where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried.* Which is as much as if she had told her, that she valued the company of her Mother above all other concerns. Did not this think you indear her to *Naomi*? and certainly nothing can more endear a soul to God, than for it to judge his favour better than life, and his *loves more than Wine.*

Now to engage your hearts to prefer the kisses of God before any other good things, with which the hand of his providence can make you happy, there needs no more, than that you should be truly possessed with the notion of your own wants, and rightly understand the differences of good. He that knows how much more excellent than the Body, the Soul of man is: will quickly understand that those things which are proportioned to its wants, are more desirable goods than those which are only suted to our more outward concerns. Study but the excellency of the love of God, and the vanity, and Earthlinesse of the Creature, the state of your souls by nature, and with respect to that guilt, which by multitudes of Sins you have contracted, from which nothing can excuse you but the blood of Christ, nor any thing evidence your absolution (to quiet your accusing, and condemning consciences, but the *kisses of his Mouth*, and you will need no more to evince to you, that these coelestial kisses, are of all good things the most excellent, the most desirable, which being well understood, the rational Soul directly moveth to a choice and desire of them above, and before all other things.

Ser-

Sermon III.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

IT is the Spouse that speaketh; she saith not, Let him embrace me, nor (as elsewhere) *He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts*, but, *Let him kiss me.---Quid tam minimum & submissum, quam osculetur me* (is *De---Ponte* his note upon the Text.) A kiss is the least token of *conjugal love and affection.* Hence observe,

The least tokens of Christs special, distinguishing love are very desirable to believing Souls. Prop.

The free Love of God shining out through Christ upon souls predestinated unto glory, in the pardoning of their sins, the acceptation of their persons, the renewing of their natures, in *strengthening, quickening, comforting influences of grace*, is what we call the *distinguishing Love* of Christ, being not the effects of his *Philanthropy*, but his εὐδοκία; now the tokens of this are *more* or *less*, or may be so called;

According to the degree of their Emanation from Christ and the Spirit of Christ; Or, 1.

According to our judgment and apprehension, or Estimation. 2.

1. *According to the degree of their Emanation.* God, whose heart is at all times the same towards his people, yet is pleased gradually to discover it, and to manifest himself unto his people. As the Sun in the Firmament (whose Light in it self is alwaies the same, and which hath alwaies the same ability and aptitude to illuminate the Air, and to refresh the Earth with its Beams, yet) gives out its Light variously according to its position in the Firmament, or aspect upon the Hemisphere, its nearness to, or distance from the Object to be inlightened, or refreshed, or as it is more or less hindered by the interposition of Clouds or Vapours; so doth the Sun of Righteousness also diffuse his Beams variously. Or, as indeed a prudent Father, though at all times his heart be full of love to his Children, yet in the discoveries and manifestations of it, he governeth himself by his own prudence relating to the Child's good, and with respect to the Child's behaviour and demeanour towards him: So though whom God

loveth, he loveth with a great love, and to the end; yet as to the discoveries and manifestations of it, he governs himself by his own Infinite Wisdom, and with a great respect to his Peoples carriage and demeanour towards him. Hence it is, that though every Child of God, be beloved of God with the same *special* and *distinguishing Love*; yet every one lives not under the same *manifestations* and *emanations* of it: He sheweth to some more, to some less, to some scarcely any, according to the Wisdom of his Counsel, and the good pleasure of his own will. One soul shall have just light enough to discern that the day is broke in his soul, that the Sun is arisen with healing in his wings upon him; another shall hardly have so much light, as to discern that, but shall walk in the dark, and see no light. Another shall have the Sun of Righteousness more fully shining upon him, and be able to say with *Job*, *I know my Redeemer lives, and that I shall see him with these Eyes*; *and though Worms shall destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God*: Or with *Paul*, Rom. 8. 38. *I know, and am persuaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing shall separate me from the Love of God in Jesus Christ.* Yea the same soul shall sometimes see its Beloved *standing* as it were *behind the wall*, and *looking in upon it* through the *Lattice*; see him in a Glass darkly; another time it shall see him with a fuller sight, as in the house with it, *face to face*. One while it shall only see as by a Wicket of hope open, and possibly but imperfectly open neither; another while its vision shall be as it were of the *Heavens opened*, and *Christ sitting at the right hand of God*, making intercession for it.

2. *The more or less of special and distinguishing grace* is often measured by the *soul's apprehension*, and *particular fancy* (which judgment possibly is not always according to Truth, but yet such as we ordinarily make.) Thus we commonly judge the *comfortable reflections of Divine Love*, to be the greatest tokens of it. The sweetest indeed they are, but possibly the *strengthening Influences* of Divine Grace, by which the soul is inabled to perform its spiritual duties, and to fight the good fight both against motions to sin from within, and temptations to sin from without, may be no less manifestations of special and distinguishing grace. But take your measures how you will, the gracious soul valueth at an high rate the least manifestations of such grace as may evidence to it that it is beloved of God with a special and distinguishing love. I do not say the least of these will satisfie such a soul: That it will not, for the soul in which God hath caused by his Spirit a spiritual thirst after himself, is continually

tinually crying out, *Give, Give!* The ſoul will not be ſatisfied, until in the Reſurrection *it awakes with God's likeneſs*; but in the mean time, the leaſt influences of this nature, will be to it *very precious and deſirable.*

The truth of this Propoſition will appear to you from the petitions of ſeveral of the Servants of God in holy Writ, more eminently thoſe which we read of concerning *David*, *Pſal.* 4. 6. *There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord* (ſaith he) *lift up the light of thy countenance upon me*; and in the following words he declares, that it ſhould be more to him than the worldlings *Harveſt* or *Vintage* greater matter of gladneſs, than their increaſe of *Corn, Wine*, or *Oil*: And *Pſal.* 84. 9. he asks no more than that the Lord would *look upon the face of his Anointed.* What can be leſs than *Beholding*, and giving the ſoul a *good look*? The liberty that the Birds of the Air, the *Swallow* and the *Sparrow* had, to make their Neſts about the *Lord's Altars*, one would think argued but a ſmall favour; yet *David* prefers their condition before his. One would think the Office of a *Door-keeper in the Lord's Houſe*, were but a ſmall preferment; yet *David* valueth it above a *Manſion in the Tents of wickedneſs.* The ſeveral expreſſions which *David* maketh uſe of in the Pſalms, to teſtifie his deſires after God, ſuch as *Beholding*, *Looking* upon him, *Remembring him*, &c. are all evident proofs of this. The Woman, *Luk.* 7. 38. counts it honour enough to ſit at Chriſt's feet, to waſh his feet with her tears, and then to *wipe them with the hairs of her head.* The Woman of *Canaan* is called a Dog, and contented with it, ſo ſhe may but lick up the *Crumbs* under her *Maſter's Table.* You read of another Woman that cried out; *If I may but touch the Hem of his Garment.* The Prophet *Zechariah* foreto'd of a time when men ſhould *take hold of the Skirt of a Jew, ſaying, We will go with you, for we have heard God is with you.* Any thing of Chriſt is precious to a ſoul that hath once taſted how good he is. *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* muſt have his *dead body*; and the Diſciples muſt run to the *Sepulchre* where he was laid. The People of God of old had a favour for the duſt of *Zion*, and *the ſtones thereof.* But much more precious muſt the leaſt emanations of that virtue be which is in him ſuited to the wants (the ſpiritual wants of poor ſouls. What can be leſs than a look, a ſmile, a word? yet we find theſe have been very precious to the People of God.

What can we think of leſs, than the hearing of a Prayer; yet *David* eſteemeth this at an high rate, *Pſal.* 116. 1, 2. For this he profeſſeth

professeth his *love to God*, and his resolution to *call upon him so long as he lived*. One would think that of all other Fellowship and Communion with Christ, a Fellowship with him in his *Sufferings*, were least desirable. St. *Paul* glorieth in this, and speaks of it as a thing desirable, *Phil.* 1. 10. *ch.* 3. 11. And we read of the Apostles praising God, *that they were thought worthy to suffer for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The same Spirit that was in all these Servants of God, is yet to be found in the souls of such as have any acquaintance with, or relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. And indeed our reason will tell us, that it must be so, if we consider but these following particulars, which will give you a reasonable account of the truth of this Proposition.

1. *The least token of special, distinguishing Grace, is of an infinitely sweet and salvifick nature and evidence.* There are common gifts of the Spirit of God, which indeed may be *sweet*, and very grateful to a spiritual nature (such are the gifts of *Prayer* and *Prophecy*, *&c.*) but yet are not of a *saving nature, or evidence*; a man may have them and perish for ever; but it is not so with such influences of the Spirit, as are tokens of special distinguishing love; spiritual gifts are to be coveted, because of a subserviency in them to *spiritual* and *saving ends*; but they are not of a saving nature, and have nothing of a saving evidence in them; but in the least token of special distinguishing love, there is something of an *evidence for Salvation*; the least of it is of a saving nature: Faith, that is but as a *grain of Mustard seed*, is as much saving, as the strongest Faith is. The measures of our comforts much depend upon degrees of grace, but our Salvation doth not. Christ bids *Zacheus* go home, for that day *Salvation was come to his house*. Salvation cometh to the soul that hour in which the least of special love shineth upon it; the least of that brings Salvation, and consequently is exceeding sweet, and must be so, if you consider this soul, as *first seeking the Kingdom of God*, allarumed with the spiritual sense of its misery by nature, its lost and undone condition in *Adam*. This is the one thing that such a soul seeks after, in comparison with which, all other things are as *dross and dung* to it. That it may discern it self beloved of God, one of those for whom Christ died, and whose sins are washed away with his blood, for this it hath wept, and prayed, and resolved to seek after it, and resolved not to be silent.

2. *There is no evidence of special Love, but is suited to some great spiritual want of the soul.* Our souls are exposed to a great variety of wants.

wants. All the tokens of God's ſpecial Love, are ſuited to ſome or other of theſe wants. Our ſouls are *impotent and weak*, both to the performance of *ſpiritual duty*, and to reſiſt our ſpiritual adverſary; to this want now *ſtrengthening grace* is ſuited. They are *dull and heavy*, and move heavily in ſpiritual duties; to this, *quickening grace is ſuited.* They are *ſad and troubled* for fear of God's wrath; to this *conſolatory grace* is ſuited. There is no influence of the ſpecial Love of God, but is ſuited to ſome ſpecial want or burden of our ſouls, and therefore the leaſt of them muſt be exceedingly deſirable, for ſo every thing is that ſuiteth our neceſſities, and ſo much the more as it ſuiteth ſome more ſpecial and eminent wants. If the Sun doth but ariſe upon the ſoul, it healeth, *Mat.* 4. 2. though it ſhineth not out in its fulleſt glory, if Chriſt ſpreadeth but a wing over it, there is healing in that wing. His very ſhadow gives delight to the ſoul, *Cant.* 2. 2. the leaſt of his fruit is pleaſant to its taſte. *If* (ſaith the woman) *I can but touch the Hem of his Garment, I ſhall be whole.*

Such is the purity of the Saints Love, that though they may have 3.
an Eye to the Recompence of Reward, which his Love brings; yet they love him for himſelf, who appears to their ſouls as *Totus deſideria*, altogether deſirable. It is his Love which their ſouls thirſt after; now the leaſt ſpecial token of Love ſheweth that he loves it, and his heart cleaveth to it. He that valueth the Love of his friend, regardeth not the *quantum* of the Token, but the nature of it; if it be of ſuch a nature as he doth not ordinarily give to any common friend; that is it which he eyeth. If a ſoul can ſee any thing which ſpeaketh its Lord joyned to it, cleaving unto it, this is it which makes it valuable. A diſcerning ſoul will take little joy in *gifts of common providence*, Riches, Honours, good Relations, common gifts. It may and will deſire theſe things while it is in the fleſh, as they fill up ſome emptineſſes in that our ſtate, but it can by no means be ſatisfied with theſe things. As *Haman* ſaid when he had been telling his Wife of his great preferments and honours; *All this doth me no good, ſo long as I ſee* Mordecay *ſitting in the King's Gate*; my Enemy is honoured and advanced as well as I: So he ſaith; The Lord hath given me riches, honour, *&c.* but all this doth me no good, ſo long as I ſee the haters of God enjoy as much of theſe things as I do; let me have ſome ſpecial token of 4.
God's Love. *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth.*

Fourthly, The Child of God knoweth, *That the leaſt token of*
Chriſts

Chriſts ſpecial love, is more worth than all the world. There is no proportion betwixt a *corporal* and a *ſpiritual good*; betwixt what is ſutable to our *fleſh*, and to our wants in this life, and what is *ſutable to our Souls*, and neceſſary for us with reſpect to our eternal felicity. The Philoſopher could ſay, *Animus cujuſque eſt quiſque.* The mind of a Man is the Man. The Chriſtian knows that *Anima cujuſque eſt quiſque.* The Soul of a Man is the Man: *What ſhall it profit a Man, if he ſhould gain the whole world, and loſe his own Soul?* The ſenſual Man values his life above thoſe things that are only good, becauſe of their ſubſerviency to that. The rational man valueth his mind above his fleſh, and accordingly ſets a price upon *knowledge* and *moral Virtue*, above thoſe things that meerly gratify his ſenſe: The ſpiritual Man valueth his *Soul*, his Soul conſidered not only as a *rational Being*, but as a *Spirit*, *an immortal Spirit*, capable of the favour of God, and an union and fellowſhip with him; and ordain'd to an eternal exiſtence, not only above his body, which he knoweth is made up of duſt, moulded up into fleſh, and blood, and bones, but above his mind. It really is of more value, and he is made apprehenſive of it: hence he cannot but value the leaſt that tendeth to make that happy above any thing elſe whatſoever. Beſides, he knows himſelf created to an eternity, and believing that his reaſon teacheth him infinitely to prefer what is good for him, with reference to an happy exiſtence to eternity above any thing that can only ſerve him for the ſhort time he is to be clothed with fleſh, and to live in this world: This Election of the loves of Chriſt before all things elſe, and the value he puts upon the leaſt tokens, and manifeſtations of it, doth naturally and rationally follow his knowledge, convictions, and faith, and proceedeth upon the ſame reaſon, upon which any reaſonable creature valueth a greater and more comprehenſive good, above what is of an inferiour vertue, and more inſignificant.

5. Nor is this other than according to the workings of our Souls in other caſes *towards Creatures which we have made the objects of our love.* The good look, and ſmile of an Husband, a letter from him, a ſmall token (be it never ſo ſmall) how welcome, and acceptable is it to the Wife? The reaſon lies in her *love* to her Husbands Perſon. *To you that believe* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *he is precious.* It is impoſſible, indeed rationally impoſſible that a Soul ſhould *believe*, (take it in what ſenſe you will) but it muſt *love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Take *believing* as it ſignifies no more than a *firm, and ſteady aſſent to the propoſition of the word* revealing Chriſt to us as he is the eter-

eternal Son of God, the *brightness of his Fathers glory, the express image of his Person,* full of kindness to the Sons of Men, pitying them, taking a delight in them, willing to save them, and to communicate of his fulness to them, and to this end coming from Heaven to Earth, clothing himself with our flesh, encompassing himself with creature infirmities, then dying upon the Cross, that he might purchase us unto himself, *&c.* I say it is not possible, that a Soul should firmly, and steadily assent and agree to these things, but he must *love Christ.* But if you take *believing* in the second sense, as it signifieth *the Souls receiving of him as its Lord, and Saviour,* its resting and relying upon him, and trusting him with all its Spiritual and Eternal Concerns, it is impossible but that the Soul should have a love for him above all created Objects, and having so, it cannot but naturally desire to be mutually beloved, and be passionately desirous of some evidences of it, and the least evidences of the reciprocations of love on his part, who is so exceeding dear in the Eyes of the Soul, must needs be exceedingly desirable to, and valuable by that Soul.

6. This is yet further advantaged from the consideration of *the exceeding low Opinion and Estimate which grace teacheth every soul upon whom it hath shined, to have, and make of it self.* The proud man valueth nothing but great things from his friend; nay he scarcely thinks any thing great enough for him to put any value upon. The reason lies in the high opinion which he hath of his own worth and merit; but the humble man puts a value upon the least kindness; because he hath a low and mean opinion of himself, so he looketh upon every thing as more than he could merit, or challenge. *Naaman* huffs when the Prophet sends to him to go and wash in the waters of *Jordan,* he expected the Prophet should have come out and *stroked* him, and he thought the Waters of *Abana* and *Parphar,* were as wholsome as those of *Jordan* were. The *Centurion* desireth but a *good word from Christ,* when Christ spake of coming to his House; *Mat.* 8. 8. *Lord* (saith he) *I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof.* The Woman of *Canaan* knowing her self to be a Dog, challengeth no more than *Crums.* Every gracious Soul is sensible that it deserveth nothing but *Hell* and *Wrath,* this makes the least tokens of Divine love highly valuable in its Eyes, who am I said *Elizabeth, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* who am I saith an humble Soul that the Lord should look upon me, that the Sun of righteousness should shine so much as with one healing beam upon

my Soul? Hence it valueth the leaſt tokens of ſpecial love. It valueth nothing leſs than that this proceedeth from its knowledge, and ſpiritual judgment of things that differ. It valueth the leaſt of this. This proceedeth partly from its knowledge, partly from that humility, with which it is clothed, as with a Garment.

7. Laſtly, *This Soul knoweth that Chriſt's Love will not terminate, and be bounded with little things.* The leaſt tokens of diſtinguiſhing Love, are but the *Earneſts* of a greater bargain, they are but the firſt-fruits to a larger Harveſt. *Thoſe that are planted in the houſe of the Lord ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God,* Pſal. 92. 13. God at firſt gives the ſoul but a *good hope,* a glimpſe of his glory, but it ſhall go on from *faith to faith,* and *ſtrength to ſtrength.*

Uſe 1. Are the leaſt tokens of Chriſts diſtinguiſhing Love ſo valuable, ſo deſirable? *what ſhould then* his *fulleſt and largeſt tokens be,* the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, which Eye hath not ſeen, Ear hath not heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of man to conceive? The *Aſſurance of his Love:* The *Manifeſtations of himſelf to his Saints in glory*? If it be ſo ſweet ſo deſirable, to ſee him *in a glaſs darkly,* what will it be to ſee him *face to face.* If his *kiſſes* be ſo deſirable, what will his *imbraces* be? If the *Hem* of *his Garment* be ſo full of vertue, and a *touch* of that ſo deſirable what is his *long white Robe* which is the white linnen of his Saints? If a good *word,* a *good look* be ſo good, what will it be to be ſet *as a ſeal upon his Heart, and upon his arm.* Surely that love will be as *ſtrong as death, as the coales of that fire which ſend forth a vehement flame.* Let this notion of truth, and the experience which any of your ſouls have had of the truth of it, kindle in you further flames of deſire after the further *enjoyments of Chriſt in this life.* Imperfect taſts of deſirable things uſe to do ſo in other things. *Quo plus ſunt potæ plus ſitiuntur aquæ.* Yet in all created goods there is ordinarily more in expectation, than fruition, but it is not ſo in Spiritual things. The Apoſtle prayeth for the *Epheſians, That they might be able with all Saints to comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and heighth, and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulneſs of God,* Eph. 3. 18, 19. It is moſt certain that there are many holy, and gracious Souls, that want *aſſurance,* they may live, they may die without it, but that Soul hath nothing of grace, that doth not deſire it, that doth not thirſt and pant after it. 2. *What will it be to be ever with the Lord!* what an object of ſpiritual thirſt and deſire is a

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fulneſs of communion with our Lord in his Fathers Houſe, when we ſhall *know as we are known*, ſee *Face to Face*. How ſhould this fill all our hearts with deſires to be diſſolved, that we might be with Chriſt, which is beſt of all? The leaſt of Chriſt is good, but that full fruition is beſt. Let this diſcourſe leave ſome ſtrong pantings in your hearts; 1. *After the aſſurance of Gods love.* 2. *After the further manifeſtations of Chriſts ſtrength to, and in your ſoul to inable you further to perfect holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* 3. *After the beatifical viſions of God in another life.*

Learn hence the great difference there is betwixt *earthly, and ſpiritual objects of our deſires and delights.* The worlds *Crums* are little valuable, tho ſome are fond of its Loaves. The good things of the world derive much of their value from the quantity of them, that it throws into our laps. The *minimum quod ſic*, the leaſt portions of the pleaſures, profits, or honours of it, have little of value in them, but the leaſt of Chriſt is exceeding precious; the things of the world affect not the Soul, or or its neceſſities, they are not certain pledges of greater meaſures, they will go but a little way, to fill the creatures emptineſſes, but it is otherwiſe with *Spiritual* bleſſings in and *through Chriſt*. Uſe 2.

Thirdly, You may from hence obſerve the difference betwixt the *Hypocrites, and the Saints deſires after Chriſt*. An Hypocrite may pretend ſome deſires after Chriſt, nay he may really deſire ſomething of his love, conſider Chriſt as a Saviour, as one that brings the Soul to life, and immortality; ſo he muſt neceſſarily be the object of the deſire of every man that hath any view of his own mortality, and that Eternal State to which man is ordained. Even *Balaam* ſaith, *Oh that I might dye the death of the Righteous, that my latter end might be like his.* But mark ye, theſe are the fulleſt manifeſtations of Divine Love, theſe are more than the *kiſſes of his Mouth*, but for thoſe tokens of love, which are below theſe, for ſuch manifeſtations of the love of Chriſt, as tend to the inabling of the Soul to ſerve and glorify God, by the ſubduing of Mans will to the will of God, the mortification of luſts, and corrupt affections, theſe are not at all valuable to a ſenſual man, not indeed to any but to the changed and renewed Soul. I do not know any one thing from which a Man may take better meaſure of himſelf, and a good Chriſtian may better diſtinguiſh himſelf from one that walketh in a vain ſhew, and meerly glorifieth in appearance than this: Uſe 3.

To a good Chriſtian the leaſt of Chriſts diſtinguiſhing love is exceed-

ing precious, and more precious than the greateſt portions of the worlds goods. The workings of the Spirit of Chriſt within, and upon the Soul, ſubduing the will of Man to the will of God, mortifying our Members, and the deeds of the Body: Taking the affections off the Earth, and Earthly things, and fixing them on more ſublime, and ſpiritual objects; the giving of the Soul a good hope through grace, theſe are things which we uſually count ſome of the leaſt tokens of ſpecial, and diſtinguiſhing love. Really they are great things (nothing of Chriſt is little) but we judge ordinarily according to ſenſe) we ordinarily eſteem a ſenſe or aſſurance, or full perſuaſion of the love of God, a much greater thing than theſe. But now for a Soul to ſet an high price, and value upon theſe, to be more ſatisfied, more to triumph, and rejoice in the conqueſt of a luſt, the victory over a temptation, than in the conqueſt of all our Enemies: More to deſire that our hearts may be filled with love to God, deſires after God, delight in God, than to have our Barns filled with Corn, or our Purſes with Gold and Silver, this I take to be ſuch a difference between a Chriſtian indeed, and a Chriſtian in a meer Name, Title, and outward Profeſſion, as a Chriſtian may reſt in, when he is inquiring into his Soul for evidences of the truth of grace. Other manifeſtations of the love of God, may be deſired for our ſelves, and with a reſpect only to our ſelves, and the quiet relief and peace of our own Spirits; a Chriſtian can deſire theſe only for the glory of God. Try your ſelves therefore Chriſtians by this Touchſtone: An Hypocrite may deſire to know that his Sins are forgiven, and that God would not impute Sin to his Soul, or that he would impute a righteouſneſs without works; an Hypocrite may deſire to live with God in glory, but theſe leſſer tokens of love he valueth not.

Uſe 4. But alas! even the beſt of Gods People muſt I fear be here reproved, not for their no valuing of theſe *kiſſes of Chriſt* (that is incompetent with a Child of God) but for their not *enough valuing of them*, and being too paſſionate and unſatisfied for want of the *comforting manifeſtations of Divine Love.* I have before told you that theſe ſenſible manifeſtations of Divine Love are exceedingly deſirable, and there is no Child of God, but is concerned, to wiſh, to pray, to labour for them. But we muſt take heed that we be not like our little Children, whom we ſhall ſometimes ſee too much ſlighting, and undervaluing, and ready to throw away what good things they have, becauſe they want ſome particular thing, which they have a mind

mind to, which it may be, we that are their Parents do not see so proper for them, especially under their present circumstances. It was lawful for *Rachel* to wish for, to pray for Children, but she sinned in saying to her Husband, *give me Children, or else I die. Hannah* was much in the same error, 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. weeping, not eating, and vexing her self, because she had *no Child*, and in the mean time forgetting that God had given her an Husband, who was *better to her than ten Sons.* So it is lawful, nay the duty of a good Christian to pray, to endeavour for the sweetest and fullest manifestations of Gods love. But I have often thought, that though these be good things of a Spiritual nature, and so vastly differing from the good things of this life, yet in this they agree with them, that they must be asked *with submission to the will of God*, because they are not *de necessariis ad salutem*, things that are necessary to life, and eternal Salvation, but such which a Soul may want without any breach of Gods Covenant with the Soul. 2. But for a Soul not only too passionately to desire these things, which speaketh its not submitting to the will of God in his not dispensing them to it, but to *over-look, deny, or undervalue all the tokens for good*, which it hath received from God, meerly because it hath not these, and to conclude that it hath nothing of Christs love; this is certainly what doth not become a Christian. Certainly a Christian ought as much to value himself upon those emanations of grace, by which he is inabled to serve, and honour God, as upon those by which his Soul is rendred more at ease, more refreshed and comforted. Every kiss of Christ, every measure of special distinguishing love is, and ought to be precious to a believing Soul.

Let me in the last place bottom upon this discourse a double word of exhortation, Use 5.

The first respecting the Men of the world; those I would perswade *to leave off their pursuit of their worldly and sensual satisfactions.* I would speak to them as one standing this day in wisdoms Porch, and crying after them in their hottest pursuits of the world, *Come and turn your hearts hither, you that are simple ones, and void of understanding.* I shall have a fairer opportunity to speak to these, when I come to consider the argument by which the Spouse backeth her Petition. But alas, we had need make these cries often; you can see the world, and the gay and fine things therein precious, and run after them with a swift pace, but you can see no excellency in the *kisses of Christ*, nothing for which they should be so desired, when 1.

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alas the world is but like a *brave glass*, which whole is of some value, but if broken in pieces, the small pieces of it are worth nothing. Christ, his love is like a *wedge of Gold*, or like a most *precious perfume*, the least particle, the least drop of which hath its value; there is no emanation of his special loves, but is suted to the Souls wants, and to some eminent necessity, under which the Soul laboureth. Hear *Solomon* speaking to you, *Prov.* 1. 22. *How long you simple ones will you love simplicity? —— And Fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Your reason tells you that a vessel of Silver, or Gold is much preferrible to one of Earth, or Glass, and as for other reasons, so for this (which you ordinarily say) break a vessel of Earth and Glass, the pieces are worth nothing, but if one of those more valuable mettals be broke, the least pieces have their value. Why should not the same reason instruct you, that Christs favour is to be prefer'd to all the world can afford you, a little of the world is not much valuable, a plentiful estate, the highest pitches of honour, a belly full of pleasure, that indeed may appear desirable; but the least tokens of Christs love, the least expressions of his favour are most valuable things. The kisses of the world are for the most part but *Oscula Iscariotica*, or *Jeabitica*, like the kisses of *Judas*, who in order to the betraying of his Master first kissed him, or like the kis of *Joab* to *Amasa*, who under pretence of *kissing him*, smote him under the fifth rib, and slew him. Christ's kisses are kisses of *peace and reconciliation*, of love, and favour.

2. Secondly. This notion calleth to all those that are true Christians, and that for three things.

1. *For a due value of the least tokens of Christs special, and distinguishing love*, look narrowly to make up your judgment, whether what you take to be such, be such or no, and there you must take heed that you do not make conclusions from *the gifts of common providence*. No man can judge of the love or hatred of God to his Soul from any thing which befalls him in this life. No man can judge of any special love from Gods giving him a longer life, greater measures of health, a more plentiful estate, or any thing of this nature. God gives the worst of men their portion in such things as these. No nor 2dly from *common gifts*, such as those of *knowledge, utterance, &c.* look therefore narrowly to make your judgment, and the surest Judgment is from such things, as more conform you to the *nature*,

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or will of God; but if you will find *aliquid Christi*, any thing which you can call Christs, or speaks his distinguishing love, take heed of undervaluing that.

Secondly, It calls to you *for the use of all means for proficiency, and growth in Grace*: Such as hearing the Word, Prayer, the use of all the Ordinances of God, for in reason if the least tokens of Christs special love be desirable, greater manifestations of it are much more desirable. Labour for more holiness, more heavenly-mindedness, more subjection of your will to the will of God. Hath the Lord blessed you with a faith of adherence, a power given you from above to cast your Souls upon the Lord Jesus Christ? Labour for faith of evidence, be like the Travellers to *Zion* (of which *David* speaketh) *Psal.* 84. *that go from strength to strength*, until they all appear before the Lord in *Zion*. It may be a good question sometimes to satisfy a troubled doubting Soul, what is the *Minimum quod sic*, the lowest degree or measure of saving grace, but it is an ill hearing from a lazy wanton Soul.

Lastly, it calls loudly to us to *thirst after Heaven*, where the believing Soul shall be the *Lambs Wife*, and follow him whithersoever he goes, and be blessed with the clearest vision, and the fullest imbraces of its beloved. Oh how pleasant will the mansions of glory be to those Souls, to whom the imperfect views that it hath had of Christ in this life have been so desirable, while we are *present in the Body*, even *Paul* himself owneth himself *absent from the Lord*. Now indeed we are the Sons of God, now we are in a capacity of his kisses, tokens of special love, sufficient to uphold and refresh our Souls, but there we shall be at the rivers of pleasures, where there is not only pleasure, but fulness of pleasures, and that for evermore. O Blessed are they that shall be alwaies before the Throne of God, seeing their Redeemer with those Eyes, and taking their fills of his love.

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Sermon IV.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

BY the beloveds *Kisses* mentioned in this Text, I have understood Christs *special and distinguishing love*, and *the tokens of it*, by which, either as God, blessed for ever, or as the *Mediatour* of the world, he may discover *his* kindness to the Children of Men, or the Members of his Church in common; from whence I have already observed, *that the* heart of a Believer is after distinguishing love. *Kisses* being the least of those Evidences, I have shewed, *That the least tokens of Christs special, and distinguishing love, are, and will be very sweet to Believers Souls.*

But I observe the word is in the *plural number. Kisses*, and so may signify either. 1. *Various dispensations of Grace.* Or, 2. *Various repetitions of the same Acts of Grace.* Hence the next Proposition ariseth.

Prop. *That altho the least dispensations of special and distinguishing love be exceeding sweet, and precious to Souls which have once tasted how good the Lord is, yet their hearts will be after fuller, and frequent dispensations and repetitions of it.* I take both these to be comprehended in the plurality of the term. מבש קות

Grace is a thing which is but one piece considered as it is in God, their's nothing *plural* in the one Divine Being; but as the *Sea*, which is in itself but one, yet as it washeth upon several coasts, receiveth several names and denominations, as the *English Sea*, the *Irish Sea*, and the *Baltick Sea*: So as the Grace of God respecteth the several necessities, and wants of us necessitous Creatures, it also obtaineth several names, and admits of several *distinctions*, and is shewed by several *Acts*. The *Grace of God* in the sense I am now speaking to, it signifyeth nothing but the *free love of God looking upon the Sons of Men with respect to the several necessities of their Souls.* Its *variety* ariseth from us, and our necessities, it is not divided in the *fountain*

tain only in the *stream*, and thus *Grace* admits of several distinctions, which I shall open to you in a few words, that you may rightly understand the various notions of it.

1. The most famous distinction of it is into *that which doth render the Soul acceptable to God*, and that which is love, *and freely given, but doth not make the Soul acceptable in Gods sight*, at least not first acceptable, or is not that for which God doth at first *accept the Soul*. The first is that which we call the *Grace of Justification*, which is the *free love of God* shining upon the Soul, imputing to it *a righteousness without works*, and *not imputing transgression* (as the Apostle expoundeth it, *Rom.* 4. 6. 8.) the *second* we call the grace of *Regeneration* and *Sanctification*, which is the love of God freely shewed to the Soul, by which its heart is renewed and changed, and filled with new habits, and dispositions, inclining and inabling it to what God requireth of it. This is *Grace*, it is from the power, and free love of God, though it be not that grace, for which God at first accepteth the Soul (as the Papists say.)

2. This Grace of *Regeneration* and *Sanctification*, is also usually distinguished into *Habitual* and *Actual*. *Habitual Grace* is nothing else but the free love of God shining upon the Soul, *inabling it to will*, and to choose the things that are good, and pleasing to God, *he giveth to will* (saith the Apostle,) and we are made *willing in the day of his power* (saith the Psalmist) *Actual or acting Grace*, which is the love of God shewed to the Soul in inabling us to do the things that are good, for as it is he that giveth *to will*, so it is he *who giveth to do*, both *of his own good pleasure*; and our Lord told his Disciples. *John* 15. 3. *Without me you can do nothing.*

3. There is another distinction of Grace into *Preventing* and *Subsequent*. Preventing Grace is that love of God which *preventeth*, and goeth before any good motions, or actions of ours, according to that of the Prophet, *I was found of them that sought me not, and of those that did not inquire after me.* This is usually called the *first grace*. *Subsequent grace* is that love of God which followeth this, and is variously manifested to the Souls of Gods People. In the first we are meerly *passive*, we only *receive it*: in the other we are *active*.

4. There are other notions of grace, but I shall instance only in one more. *Special grace* is the *free love of God either concerning the being of a true Christian*, or 2dly, *Concerning its well-being*. That grace which concerneth the being of a true Christian, which quickneth the Soul which before was a Child of Wrath, *dead in trespasses and*

sins, is either the *Grace* of *Justification*, and what concerneth that; this is *first grace*, and *preventing grace*. Or, 2. The grace of *Regeneration*, by which a new heart is given unto us, and we are inclined, disposed, and inabled to the operations of a spiritual life. Or, Secondly, *What concerneth the better being of a Christian in the managing of all the actions, and concerns of the spiritual life*. This again is divided into *quickning grace*, *strengthening Grace*, *and consolatory Grace*. 1. *Quickning grace* may either signify that love of God, by which our Spiritual powers, habits, and inclinations are drawn out into acts. 2 *Or that whereby a Soul is made more active and lively, and free in the service of God*, which removes those difficulties, that heavinesse, and deadnesse, and dulnesse, which we often find upon our Souls as to spiritual things. For this you read *David* so often praying in *Psal.* 119.

2. *Strengthening grace*, which is the love of God shewed to the Soul in further *inabling* it both to its spiritual actions, and to the managing of the good fight against *the World*, *the Flesh and the Devil*; the Apostle calleth it a being *strengthened with might in the inward Man*; of this Saint *Paul* speaketh, *Phil.* 3. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

3. *Consolatory grace*, which signifieth *the love of God shining upon the Soul, that is sad, and heavy*, refreshing it either from the view, and sense of the truth of its gracious habits, or from the sealings of some promise, giving the Soul an assurance, or full perswasion of the love of God. *David* crieth out, *when wilt thou comfort me*? Thus you see the variety of gracious dispensations, the love of God is one as it is in him as the fountain, but it divideth itself into several streams, as it shineth upon divers Souls, or the same Soul oft-times in differing circumstances, or with respect to divers wants which our Souls have.

Secondly, As there is variety in the dispensations of grace, so *grace* discovers itself in various *acts*. Divines say that the *grace* of *Justification*, so far as it respecteth the *Souls State*, varieth not. Nor is repeated, but the acts of grace referring to our justified estate, they are repeated. God doth not pardon sin before it is committed, but repeateth his gracious act in pardoning, as the Soul repeateth its transgressions.

Now this is that which I say in this proposition, that the Spouse of Christ, the truly gracious Soul is not satisfied with any single dispensation of grace, nor with a single act, it desires not only the *first grace*, but *further grace*, not only the *grace of Justification*, but the

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grace of regeneration also, not only *gracious habits*, but that it may be *excited*, and *quickned* to *spiritual actions*, not only that it may *do them*, but that it may do them with some *strength* and *vigour*, with some life, and chearfulness, it desires renewed acts of pardon, renewed influences of spiritual strength and life. Let us but a little see it in the great instance of *David* the man according to Gods own heart, we shall find him speaking to our purpose in several *Psalms*, Psal. 19. 13. *Cleanse thou me from secret faults*, there he beggeth for *pardoning love*, will this satisfy this holy man? will he think it enough if God pardoneth his Sin? see what followeth in that *Psalm*; *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me*; he must have strengthening as well as pardoning grace, he desires to be freed from the *commanding*, as well as from the *condemning power of Sins*. Look into the 51 *Psalm* (a Psalm much spent in petitions for *special grace*) v. 7. He prays for *pardon. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than the Snow*, he speaks in an old Testament phrase, with reference to the *Levitical* rites. Christ speaketh to *Peter*, *Joh.* 13. much in the same dialect, *Except I wash thee, thou canst have no part in me.* But the meaning is pardon me, remove the guilt of my sin from me; but is this enough for this holy Man? Is this all that he asketh of God. No, *v.* 8. *Make me to hear the voice of Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* There he prayeth for *Consolatory Grace:* Well, will this yet satisfie the thirst of this holy Man? No, he must also have a *renewed Heart*, a right *Spirit*. The Spirit of God resting upon him, dwelling & abiding in him: A right Heart as well as a righteous Heart, *v.* 10. *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.* v. 11, 12. *Take not thy holy Spirit from me. Uphold me with thy free Spirit.* He must not only be set right in Gods way, but he must be kept right, and upheld in it. Look upon him in that 119 Psalm, *Psal.* 119. 28. *Strengthen me according to thy Word.* The Lord had given him the *Pardon of his Sin*, he had given him *Wisdom*, so as he tells us in that Psalm, he was become *wiser than his Teachers.* God had sanctified Affliction to him, so as by it *he had learned to keep Gods Statutes.* The Lord had given him an heart to *love his Law*, to make it his *Meditation night and day*, yet he cries, *Strengthen me O Lord*: And again, *v.* 25. *Quicken me in thy way, Quicken me after thy Loving-kindness.* v. 40 *Quicken me in thy Righteousness.* Hath he enough yet? No; one thing he yet wants, *v.* 42, *Mine Eyes*

fail for thy Word, when wilt thou comfort me? There is hardly any Dispensation of Grace which we do not find *David* in that Psalm pleading with God for. This one instance of *David* is enough to shew you the temper of every Soul, which hath but once tasted how good the Lord is. Nor indeed can it be otherwise:

1. If we consider *the Beauty and excellency which appeareth to such a Soul in every Dispensation of Grace.* The Spouse saith of Christ in another part of this Song, *He is altogether lovely.* There is no part of Christ which is not in itself lovely; he is *the brightness of his Fathers Glory, the fulness of the God Head dwells in him bodily*: As every Beam of the Sun, every Emanation of that Body of Light is lovely to him whose Eyes are open to discern it: So every Beam of the Sun of Righteousness, every Emanation of his Love must necessarily be lovely to the Soul that hath its senses exercised to discern betwixt good and evil. All Beauty is attractive; whatsoever appeareth to our Souls lovely and beautiful, appeareth also desirable. But this is not all, though Beauty and Comeliness be attractive, and allures our Souls into an earnest desire after it, yet profit is more.

2. Secondly, *There is no Dispensation of Divine Grace, but suiteth some great want of the Soul.* It is the same Reason that I gave you why the *least of Christ* is so *precious:* Because the least of his Grace is suited to some great want of our Souls. What I there applied to the *least of his Love*, I here apply to the varieties of his gracious dispensations, and indeed reasonably; for there would be no variety in *grace*, if there were not a variety of *defects and wants, and emptinesses* in our Souls; that which distinguisheth divine grace, is our *various wants and necessities*, and we can as naturally not desire a supply for our own discerned defects and wants, as we cannot desire various emanations of divine love, suited to the supply of them. Nature prompteth us to desire a supply for every craving of our Souls. The Soul is sensible that it daily sinneth, and cannot but desire *pardoning grace*, and say unto God every day, *Forgive us our debts*; it is sensible, that it wants *purity and holiness*, and therefore cannot but desire a *right Spirit*. Its wants are many, and it therefore desireth various dispensations of grace to supply them; they are *daily renewing*, therefore it desires *repeated acts* of grace to be renewed also.

3. A third reason lyeth in the *Concatenation of grace.* The Philosopher saith, *Virtutes sunt Concatenatæ*, that all vertues are chained together, and no man is truly virtuous, but hath in him the habits of

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all Virtue, they make Virtue to lie in the reduction of the whole Soul, to the rule, guidance, and conduct of reason. I am sure *Gratiæ sunt concatenatæ*, the Graces of Gods Spirit, are like Pearl stringed together, and that upon a double account: 1. With *respect to themselves.* 2. With *respect to our sense, and apprehension. Pardoning grace* never goeth without *renewing and regenerating grace.* God never saith to any Soul, *Thy Sins are forgiven*, but he addeth, *sin no more.* The *Grace of Consolation* never goeth without the Grace of *Sanctification.* The *Grace of Regeneration* is alwaies attended with some degrees of that Grace which *strengtheneth*, and *quickneth* the Soul unto its *Spiritual work and duty.* 2. As to our *sense of it.* The Grace of God being as I have before said, nothing else but the *Love of God* freely shining upon us, with respect to our several circumstances, and diversified wants; the Soul is prone from the want of a supply as to one thing to suspect its want of all. Hence it is that it suspecteth the want of the love of God in the whole, from its sense of the want of it in part. Indeed this oft-times is the error of a Soul that is truly gracious, from its not distinguishing betwixt those things that are necessary to *Eternal life* and *Salvation*, and those influences that are meerly *accommodating*, and tending to the better being of the spiritual life, the dispensations of which are not meerly directed from the *divine love*, but from the *divine wisdom*, and sometimes are with-held from the wisdom of God, by which he directeth his own motions to their ends. Hence as *Gideon*, when the Angel came to him, and said, *The Lord is with thee, O thou mighty man of valour*, replyed. *If the Lord be with us, why am I thus?* So the Soul thirsting after the love of God, if any go about to perswade it, under its sadness, and dejections under the sense of its weakness as to spiritual duties, or dulness, and heaviness in the performance of them, that yet the love of God is toward it, it hath a truth of Grace, it cries out, *If God loved me, why am I thus?* I am weak, why am I not strengthened, or my Soul is dull, and dead, and heavy, why am I not quickned? Or I am sad, and dejected, if God loved me, why am I not comforted? The Soul of a believer is apt to conceive, that because *Love* is one in God, therefore it cannot be a sharer in his love, while it wants any one aspect of it, which might suite its spiritual wants.

Another reason may be, the *possibility which the Soul apprehends of obtaining all grace.* Let a thing appear to us never so beautiful, never so useful, yet if we lye under an apprehension of its impossibili- 4.

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ty to obtain it, this moderateth its deſires after it; nay extinguiſheth them; for our Reaſon forbids our Wills to move after things which we apprehend not poſſible to be obtained: But ſuch is the goodneſs of God towards us, that there is no diſpenſation of his love, but he hath ſomewhere or other promiſed and revealed to us as poſſible to be obtained by us. Now good apprehended poſſible to be obtained by us, is the proper object of the deſires of our Souls, we are told, that *it hath pleaſed the father, that in Chriſt all fulneſs ſhould dwell, And that the fulneſs of the God-Head dwelt in him bodily*, 1 *Col.* 19. 2 *Col.* 12. *and of his fulneſs* (ſaith the Evangeliſt *Joh.* 1. 16.) *We have all received grace for grace.* To paſs by other interpretations of that χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος ſome underſtand, *Grace* ſuited to all that *Grace* which is *in Chriſt.* There is no habit of Grace in Chriſt ſuited to our human nature and ſtate, but believers may receive ſomething from him in proportion to it. There is no love of God to Chriſt, which fitteth us, or may fit us in our proportions, but we may receive. *Nay there is no love of God which floweth from the fulneſs of the Divine Nature*, of which we are capable, but *the believer may receive.* For ſaith the Apoſtle, *the Fulneſs of the God-Head dwelt in him* σωματικῶς *bodily.* In him as our mediator, that he might communicate to thoſe that are the members of his body, and that I take to be the propereſt ſenſe of thoſe words, *Of his fulneſs, that is, of the fulneſs of the God-Head*, which dwelt in him as Mediator, and dwelt in him, ſo as that he could communicate it to thoſe that believed in him. Hence he tells us, that *all power was given unto him both in Heaven and Earth, and that the Son of Man had power upon Earth to forgive Sins*, and that *God had given unto him Eternal life, that he might give it to whomſoever he pleaſed, ſo as the Soul apprehends all grace*, not only *beautiful* and *lovely*, but alſo as *poſſible* to be obtained by it from Chriſt, and having ſuch apprehenſions of it conjoined with its before-mentioned apprehenſions of the beauty and excellency of it, and the uſefulneſs of it, with reſpect to the various; and renewing wants of the Soul, it muſt neceſſarily deſire it.

Uſe 1. This notion may (as the other which I have handled) ſhew you the difference betwixt *the deſires of the Hypocrite, and thoſe of the true Child of God after Grace.* There may be ſome deſires after Grace in Souls, in whom there is no true and real change of heart, but they are either terminated, 1. *In the common gifts and graces of the Spirit.* Or 2. in the *Comfortable manifeſtations of it.* 3. Or (at furtheſt) *in ſome particular diſpenſations of it.*

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The *common gifts and graces of the Spirit of God*, may be desired by those in whom the love of God doth not dwell. By *common gifts*, I mean *knowledge, utterance, an ability to pray, to discourse of the things of God*, &c. And the reason is, because these may serve a double end, which an Hypocrite may have. 1. *His honour, and credit, and reputation in the world.* Common gifts and graces may give Men and Women a great name in the Church of God, though they will give a Man no place in the Kingdom of God. They may (especially as times may go) much serve a man both as to his *lust of gain* and *covetousness*, and also as to his lust of *Ambition*, and seeking after the honour which is from men, and serve him to appear as some body in the world, and to make him pass for a great Professor, and help him to preferments also in the Church, and so serve his Belly. You have an eminent instance of this in *Simon Magus*, *Acts* 8. 9. of whom it is said, *That he used Sorcery, and bewitched the People of* Samaria, *giving out himself to be some great one.* v. 13. *He beheld the signs, and miracles that were done*; this Man, now (to augment his reputation, and probably that he might be in a capacity to get more mony than he had been able to get by his tricks of *Hocus Pocus*, and diabolical Arts) seeing the Apostles conveying the Holy Ghost to their Disciples, by their laying on of hands, he did not only desire the graces of the Spirit thus far, but *offered them mony, for that power, that upon whomsoever he laid his hands, they also might receive the Holy Ghost.* There is no doubt but whatsoever may promove the lusts of an Hypocrites heart, may be the object of his desire. Now as a *Notional knowledge* of the things of God, or the *common practical gifts and graces of the Spirit*, may serve a man as to his profit and advantage, or as to his honour and reputation, so they mightily gratify the lusts of an Hypocrites heart, who doth all to be *seen of Men*, and whose utmost design is but to *glory in appearance*, and in the *praise of Men.* Besides this, they may also serve him very far in the quieting of his *natural conscience.* Natural light discovering to us that there is a God doth also shew us that there is some homage due to him, and hence ariseth a natural obligation upon men to be doing something in discharge of this homage, to which these common gifts are subservient. The like might be said of *moral habits*, (which are but *common grace*) men that are not touched with the love of God, or desire to please him, may yet see a beauty, and a profit too, in a moral, just and righteous conversation, and desire so much grace as may keep him from the scandal, and reproach 1.

proach of the world, and from the ruining of himself, and Family or Relations.

2. Nay Secondly, his desires may extend to the *consolatory manifestations of the love of God*, the pardon *of his sins, and the sense of that pardon*; what should hinder? In a time when a *Prince* is free of his pardons, it is not impossible that some of his Subjects may take out their pardons that it may be, have no great sense or apprehension that they stand in need of them. Hypocrites that live within the compass of the Church of God, are often hearing of *sin*, and the *wrath of God* due to sin, to *Original sin*, to *Actual Sins*, to Sins of *Omission* and *Negligence* as well as those of *Commission*, and *Presumption*; they also hear daily proclamations of Gods grace, and readiness to forgive, what should hinder but that they *ex abundanti cautela*, tho they be not touched with any great sense of sin, tho they have some good opinion of their own Righteousness may yet earnestly desire to know their iniquities are forgiven, and that the Righteousness of Christ might be imputed to them also, that they may know, that they also shall another day stand righteous before God.

3. Nor do I see any reason why they may not go one step further, and *passionatly desire some strengthning and assisting grace, against some particular lusts.* Some extravagant desires or lusts of the heart of man do not only expose him to the wrath of God in another world, but to the wrath of God manifested in this life. Such now as the *lusts of the flesh, drunkenness* &c. Experience tells us that the pursuit of these ruines mens healths, estates, reputations; whatsoever is desirable to us in this life and concerning such extravagant motions of our affections and passions, as have these issues which are contrary to the natural desires of *life* and *health*, and *prosperity* in the world; I cannot tell any reason but that an hypocrite may sincerly, desire of God strength against them. But now in this stands the child of God distinguished from all hypocrites; In his desire after all grace, not this or that *kiss* but every kiss of Christs mouth, every manifestation of the love of God to a soul, particularly such manifestations of Gods love, as serve not at all to gratify any desires of the flesh whether respecting gain and profit, or honour and reputation in the world, but such as serve to make the soul more holy, and spiritual, more like to God, more compliant with the will of God in all things; the hypocrite desires influences of grace, not that he might glorify God but meerly that he might serve a turn.

Use 2. Secondly, This discourse will let us see *The great difference betwixt* the

the desires that are found in the child of God after *Grace*; and *those desires which may be found in him after the things of the world.* The best of Gods people are compositions of *soul* and *body*, as they have a spiritual part which hath its desires and cravings, so they have the cravings of the flesh also; their outward necessities justify in them some desires of the things of this life, but now these desires are limited, *If God will be with me saith Jacob, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God*, Gen. 28. 20, 21. *Two things (saith Agur Prov.* 30.7.) *have I required of thee, deny me not them before I die. Remove far from me vanity, and lyes, give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me.* The child of God is so far from desiring abundance of the world, that he often prayeth against it. He would not be full lest (as *Agur* expresseth himself *v.* 9.) *he should deny God and say who is the Lord?* he would not be wholly empty, *lest being poor he should steal and take the name of God in vain.* As to grace he is like the *horseleaches daughters* still crying, *give, give.* But for the world if he hath food convenient for him, he saith to all the world as *Esau* once to *Jacob. I have enough my Brother, I have enough, keep that thou hast unto thy self.* No child of God covets all the world. His conversation is as to it without *covetousness*, if he hath but Bread to eat, and Rayment to put on, if he can but make a competent provision for his family, and have but something to give to them that want, he blesseth God he hath enough; but as to *grace*, he may be added as a fifth thing to those four which *Solomon* Speaks of which never say they have enough. Nor indeed do I know two worser evidences against any soul, than never to think it hath enough of the world, and yet to be satisfyed with any measures of grace. I must confess I have been often troubled to see those whom I should otherwise have judged excellent Christians so fond of the enjoyments of this world, and so unsatisfyed when the providence of God hath crossed them in those desires and expectations. I wish I could see equal pantings in the souls of some who yet would be thought great professors after Christs kisses, as I often see in them after the kisses of the world. But alas that is impossible that nail would drive out the other, Sirs, that is a dreadful text which you have, 1. *John* 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things of the world: If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* The world is a thing that may be touched with a Saints hands,

and moderately used for his necessities, but it must not be loved, it must have no place in the Child of Gods Heart. What shall we say then to such Professors, as are much more fond of sensual satisfactions to gratify their sensitive appetite, than they are of the Grace of God to *mortify that appetite*, to sublimate their affections, subjugate their passions, to learn them in all Estates to be content to submit their wills unto the will of God: How dwelleth the love of Christ in such Souls as are more fond of the worlds kisses than of his?

Use 3d. But I shall shut up this discourse with a word of *Exhortation*, persuading you to speak after the Spouse in my Text, *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his Mouth.* Cease not till you have brought up your hearts to this frame, that they cannot be satisfied without something of Christs fulness, without some tasts of all the *riches of Grace*; whatsoever I have given you as the reasons of this truth, may be used by you as arguments in the case. There's no kiss of Christ, no Beam of Grace, but hath its lightsomness, and glory in it. No dispensation of Grace but is suited to some eminent want of the Soul, if you discern it not, the fault is in your Eyes, you do not understand the cases of your own Souls so well as you ought to do, it would be no Grace, no Love, if it were not proportioned to some want in us. It will be an hard thing for you to satisfy your Souls in the having any truth of Grace, if you find not your Souls thirsting after every manifestation of it. There is no influence of Grace, but is possible to be obtained. There is a fulness of the God-Head in Christ considered as your Mediator, and he is therefore full, that we might drink abundantly of his fulness, but to all these before enlarged upon, I shall add two.

1. *It is an evidence of true Grace to be thirsty after all Grace.* That Soul loveth not Christ truly that doth not desire that he should love it fully. True love is satisfied with nothing less than *all of the Beloved*, and renders the Soul jealous presently, if it wants but one good look bestowed upon another.

2. Secondly, *The more thou hast of Grace, the more thou wilt doubtless have of Glory.* I know some question whether there shall be any degrees of glory, for my own part I see little reason to question it; doubtless those that lie most in Christs Bosom here, shall sit neerest him upon his Throne hereafter. I shall shut up my discourse with four or five directions in this case.

1. First, *Labour to understand the various emanations of special, and distinguishing Grace*, how many ways the Sun of Righteousness may shine

ſhine upon Souls with healing in his Wings. I am afraid many talk of Grace, ſpecial diſtinguiſhing Grace, who do not underſtand it as they ought to do. Study to underſtand Chriſts ſaving looks upon Souls, and to diſtinguiſh them from other looks, which have no ſuch ſaving vertue, and evidence in them. Chriſts ſaving looks upon Souls, are either ſuch as *evidence pardon of Sin*, or *contribute to the change of the heart in firſt or further degrees of holineſs*: *Or comforting us with the view of our own ſincerity*, take a right notion of Chriſts kiſſes.

2. *Be ſure in thy deſires of further Grace thou forgetteſt not to be thankful for what thou haſt*, the leaſt token of love for good to thy Soul is more worth than the world, ther's nothing little in Grace. I before obſerved to you the paſſions of ſome Chriſtians, who are ready to overlook all that God hath done for their Souls, if they want ſome particular diſpenſation of Grace, which their hearts are ſet upon.

3. *Make uſe of what thou haſt. To him that hath ſhall be given.* It is a ſaying which our Saviour applyeth to the parable of the ſower, *Mat.* 13. 12. *Luk.* 8. 18. and to the parable of the *Talents*, *Mat.* 25. 29. In the two firſt places the meaning may be: *To him that hath in actual poſſeſſion*, ſo it may be conceived as a promiſe of further grace to thoſe who have any thing of the truth of grace, but in the 25. *Mat.* 29. it is plainly to be underſtood of ſuch as make uſe of, and improve what they have, for it is ſpoken with reference to thoſe Servants that had *ten Talents*, and had gained other *ten*, and *five talents*, and had gained other five.

4. In thy deſires of more Grace diſtinguiſh betwixt *neceſſary and comfortable influences* betwixt manifeſtations of the Spirit given thee to *profit withal*, and ſuch as are given thee to *make thy life more eaſy, and cheerful*, the firſt thou mayeſt beg more abſolutely, and be as earneſt for them as thou wilt. The latter muſt be asked with more explicite ſubmiſſion to the will of God, they being ſuch as are not only not neceſſary to thy glorifying of God, under all circumſtances, but not neceſſary to the eternal Salvation of thy Soul, & ſuch for which the wiſdom of God may ſee more reaſon under ſome circumſtances to with-hold from thee, and that in order to thy edification and improvement in holineſs. As to ſuch influences, though thou oughteſt to deſire them, and to pray for them, yet thou oughteſt alſo to be content to wait for them. *David* did ſo: *His Eyes failed*, while he ſaid; *When wilt thou comfort me?*

5. *Wait upon God in all his own inſtitutions.* The Ordinances of God are uſually called *means of Grace*, becauſe they are uſually made

use of by God, as means in, and by which he communicateth his Grace in the several influences of it to our Souls. These Ordinances are the *Word*, *Sacrament*, and *Prayer*. The first Grace is usually dispensed to us upon reading, or hearing the Word of God, and so is *further Grace* also. Therefore the *Apostle Peter* commands us to *desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. I had* (saith *David*) *perished in my affliction, if thy Word had not been my delight. The Law of the* Lord (saith *David*) *is perfect, converting the Soul, the Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, the Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoycing the heart, the Commandment of the Lord is pure inlightning the Eyes*, *Psal.* 19. 6. 7. Christs love is a thing different from the Word, but it is shewen to the Soul in the use of the Word. Infinite instances might be given you of *Christs* kissing Souls, (manifesting his special love to Souls, is it which I mean by it) in the reading, and especially in the hearing of the Word; there it is, that is, in the use of that, that he usually speaks to the hearts of Men and Women, hence the Apostle tells us, *that the holy Scriptures are able to make the Man of God wise to Salvation, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instructions in righteousness*: Yea, *and for patience and comfort too*, *Rom.* 15. 4. *For whatsoever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* The *Sacrament* that is another mean, the Sacramental believing, eating of the Bread and Wine, is an *eating of the flesh*, and a *drinking of the Blood of Christ*, a feeding upon all Christs fulness as Mediator. *Prayer* is a mean of all Grace, whatsoever God hath promised in a way of Grace, is all promised upon this condition, *That he will for it be inquired of by his People.*

5. *Walk humbly and uprightly before God.* The humble he will teach, (saith the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* 25.) and to the humble he will give more Grace, *Ja.* 4. 6. 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. he dwelleth with those *that are of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirits of the humble, and the hearts of those that are contrite*, and for the upright he hath told us, *that he will with-hold from them no good thing.* But this is enough to have also spoken to this Proposition. There is another term in the petition of the Text. which I shall take notice of, she prayeth not only that her beloved would *kiss* her, and that not with one but *many kisses*, but she adds *of his Mouth.* But of that hereafter.

Ser-

Sermon V.

Canticles 1. 2.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.

I Told you in the close of my last discourse that I should not yet leave this Text, because of the last words [--- *of his Mouth*;] which we must either be allowed as a *Pleonasme*, and superfluous, or to contain in them yet some further spiritual *Instruction*. The Jews say there is not *the least tittle of the Law, upon which great things do not depend*; nor do I fancy the allowing of more *Pleonasms* in holy writ, than must necessarily be allowed. I shall therefore take notice of what *Origen* and *Beza*, and divers others have before me noted from the addition of these words; *That the believing Soul thirsts after a communion with Christ in his Word.* Mr. *Ainsworth* taking special notice of the term *kisses*, understands the *Doctrine of the Gospel*, which is the *Word of Reconciliation*, as kisses are *amoris & reconciliationis symbola*, the tokens of love, and reconciliation: I am sure the notion is in itself true, whether the sense of this Text or no. *The Law worketh Wrath*, (saith the Apostle) the Doctrine of the *Gospel* alone speaks *love, and peace*, Christs Spouse here (say some interpreters) desires his manifestation in the Flesh, & the publication of the Doctrine of the Gospel, together with the comfortable application of those Doctrines to her conscience. I am sure there is a truth in that. Let me therefore a little make use of their notion. Take this for the Proposition:

Prop. *It is of the nature of a believing Soul to thirst after a communion with Christ in his Word, his Gospel especially, and the teachings of his Spirit in and by that.*

I here join two of those propositions together, which I distinguished upon the opening of the words. She desires the *kisses of his Mouth*. 2. *That he should kiss her with the kisses of his Mouth*. This Proposition will offer me an opportunity to discourse to you, the affection

affection of the believing Soul, to the *words of Christ*, both in the more external, and more spiritual, and internal teachings and ministrations of it.

The words of the Gospel are the *words of Christ*, the *kisses of his mouth*, whether they be applied, and set home to the particular conscience yea or no. The ministration of the Gospel is in itself exceeding glorious: *Therein* (saith the Apostle,) *is the Righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. Rom.* 1. 17. Therein is Gods way of Salvation revealed to lost sinners, and by it *life* and *immortality* are *brought to light*. Now this word of God is to be considered;

1. *As written for our Instruction.* For saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 15. 4. *whatsoever things were written before, were written for our learning, that we through patience, and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

2. *As preached.* So it is the *Ordinance of God* for our *faith*, and therefore called *The word of Faith, Sanctification, Consolation and Eternal Salvation*, for indeed the supply of all the spiritual wants and necessities of our Souls. Hence there are three ways by which our Souls have a communion with God in his Word: *Reading*, *Hearing*, and *Meditation.*

1. *Reading* is one means by which we come to the knowledg of the will of God in his Word. *The King of Israel* was commanded *to read* in *the Book of Gods Law all the days of his life, that he might learn to keep the Law of his God*, and there is a blessing pronounced *to him that readeth.* Indeed he that readeth the word as it lyeth before us in our Bibles hath this advantage, that he is sure what is there plain to his understanding, is the undoubted, pure Word of God; and while a man readeth the Scriptures he is but repeating of Gods Word to his own soul, or hearing God immediately speaking to him.

2. *Hearing the word preached is another means of communion with God in his Word.* This is an Ordinance of God, and such a one, as he honoureth with being the great means of calling, and saving such as he hath ordained to life: So as in that ordinance a soul hath an opportunity to *meet God*, to *draw nigh unto* him, to *hear him speak unto it.* We must take heed that we do not think, that all which we hear out of pulpits is spoken by God; God no further speaketh by the Minister, than the Minister keepeth unto his Text, & speaketh according to the *Scriptures*, either by way of *interpretation*, or *application.* And therefore every good Christian, is to *search the Scriptures* whether what their Preachers deliver be consonant to them. Those noble

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Bereans mentioned *Acts.* 17. did so when St. *Paul* was the Preacher, and are commended for it, The Scriptures are to be judged by no other rule, but *Sermons* are to be measured by the *holy Scriptures.* No man hath communion with God by hearing, further than so far as that is consonant to the will of God which he heareth. But admitting the Minister of Christ answereth his name and Office, and faithfully revealeth, and applieth the will of God, while we hear we have communion with God; God communicateth his holy will unto us, and we communicate with him by an obedient Ear who hath comanded us to *hear that our souls may live.*

A third way is by *Meditation.* This is an act of our *inward* man standing upon the things which we *have read* or *heard*, as necessary to the souls spiritual nourishment, as *Digestion* is to the nourishment of our bodies by what is their proper food; a duty much practised by *David Psal.* 119. 97, 99. And a good man is described by it. *Psal.* 1. 3. *He meditateth in the law of the Lord night and day.* By this, the soul doth not only fasten the word of God upon it self but it also dives deeper into the depths of it. I say this communion with God in his word is very desirable to the spouse of Christ. I added *his gospel especially.* 3.

The Word of God in the holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is made up of several parts.

There is in it sacred history; no unuseful part of holy Writ, it being that which more than any other acquainteth us with Gods way of of *providence* with his people of old. 1.

You have in it many Moral *Instructions*, and *Precepts of Christianity and Godliness*, an admirable part of Scripture, that which makes the holy Scriptures to be what no other book in the world is, *a light to our feet, and lanthorn to our paths* Shewing us what we are to do, what to decline and avoid but yet these are not properly called *Gospel doctrines.* 2.

You have in it many *Prophesies*, or *predictions* of what God intended to do in the world, most of which are fulfilled; some we yet live in the expectations of. 3.

You have also in it many *terrible threats*, and *curses*, and many woes denounced against the violaters of the law of God; these are excellent portions of holy Writ, to keep your souls in awe and make us afraid of sinning against God, but these are not properly *Gospel Doctrines* but properly belong to the *Law* which declareth and worketh wrath. 4.

You have also in those sacred books, *many declarations of the* 5.

good

good will, and love of God to poor loſt Sinners declared in, and through Jeſus Chriſt. You have an hiſtorical part of the Goſpel, declaring what Chriſt hath done, and Suffered for us, a declarative and promiſſory part, proclaiming Salvation to poor loſt creatures, and promiſing life and Salvation, and all grace to ſome poor undone ſinners, promiſes for the conferring, and increaſe of grace. Theſe and ſuch like, I principally underſtand by *Goſpel Doctrines.* The Doctrine of Gods free grace in the pardoning of ſin, and the *imputation of Chriſts Righteouſneſs* to the ſoul. Doctrines that reveal Chriſt and tend to bring the ſoul to Chriſt, or direct the ſoul in walking with him. Now I ſay tho the believing ſoul values every line of holy Writ, and hath a reverence for the whole Word of God, and deſires a communion with God in reading, and hearing and meditating in every part of his revealed will, yet it hath a ſpecial thirſt after thoſe portions of it which contain theſe Revelations: Other parts are ſweet but theſe are ſweeter than the *Hony* and the *Hony-comb.* No portions of Scripture are like theſe to the believer. Every verſe in the book of God is a Star but as Stars differ one from another in glory, ſo do the Revelations of the will of God in our apprehenſions as more ſuited to our neceſſities. For the proof of the propoſition: There is ſo much reaſon for it, that were it not that it is fit your *Faith* (for the help of which the Miniſtry is ordained) ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of men but in the power of God, I might forbear the uſe of any Scripture texts in the caſe. The World was many hundred years old before there was any written Word of God, (of which we have any record.) The firſt that we read of was *the Book of the Law* which the *King of Iſrael* was commanded to have alwayes before him and to *read therein all the daies of his life. Saul* was the firſt *King of Iſrael*; he was a wicked man and regarded not the *divine Law.* The next was *David* (the man according to Gods own heart.) See his Affection to the word Superlatively expreſt *Pſal* 19. 7, 8, 9, 10. 11. *The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the ſoul, the Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure making wiſe the ſimple, the Statutes of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart, the Commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the Eyes. The Judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether, more to be deſired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold, ſweeter alſo than the hony and the Hony-comb.* Pſal. 119. 14, 15, 16. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy teſtimonies, as much as in all riches, I will meditate in thy precepts and have reſpect unto thy ways, I will delight my ſelf in thy ſtatutes,* v. 97. *Oh! how I love thy law, it is my medi-*

meditation night and day. Read over that excellent *Psalm* at your leisure, you will find in it a strange variety of expressions setting out *David's* value of, and thirst after the *Word of the Lord*. I said (saith he in one passage) *perished in my affliction, if thy Word had not been my delight.* For the Word of God as delivered by Ministers, you shall all along the History of the Scripture observe, you read not of one good *King of Judah* and *Israel*, but they were very desirous in all cases of consulting with the *Prophets of the Lord*; and no doubt but the reading the Law, and the Exposition of it in the Sanctuary, was the reason why *David*, *Psal.* 42. *Psal.* 63. and *Psal* 84 so passionately bewailed his being banished from it. In short, look through all the New Testament, you shall find no company of Believers but by some Expressions or other declaring their Zeal for, and fondness of the Word of God. And the same Spirit continued in gracious Souls after the times that the Scripture makes mention of. I remember *Hierom* tells us of a good woman, whom he saith he could never find without a *Bible in her hand*; and Mr. *Fox* in his *Martyrology* tells us a story of Three Maids (in *Lincolnshire*, if I remember right) who sold their Estates in a time of Persecution to buy a few Leaves of the Bible. It were infinite to tell you the Instances we have in *Ecclesiastical History*, of the great thirst after, and delight in the Word of God, which good people have expressed. What need we any further Instance than what the Experience of our own Age doth afford? How naturally do Souls born again, *as new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word of God?* It is true some Hypocrites (especially in times when Religion is in credit and reputation) may lay hold of the Skirts of a Jew, and say, We will go with you: I mean, may shew some fondness of hearing and reading the Word; but no Child of God, no regenerate man, but is indeed thirsty of it. So that as it was said of *Paul*, as soon as he was converted, *Behold he prayeth*; so it may be said of every man and woman, let them before have been never so loose, and vain, and careless as to reading and hearing the Word; *Behold he readeth*, or *Behold he heareth.* Nor indeed is it possible it should be otherwise.

If we consider first *That this is the Will of God concerning every Soul.* The Soul is unchanged till it be in some degree *willing and obedient.* So as what St. *Paul* spake more openly, he saith to God though more privately, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do?* Now this is one of the first things that God calleth such a Soul to do. *Hear,* (saith God) *and your Souls shall live.* As God said to *Paul, Go into* 1.